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THE  
ADVENTURES  
OF  
GIL BLAS de SANTILLANE.

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THE HISTORY OF

OF

THE ISLAND OF SAINT LUCIA.



THE  
ADVENTURES  
OF  
GIL BLAS  
DE  
SANTILANE.

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Published for the Improvement and Entertainment of  
the BRITISH YOUTH of both Sexes.

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By W. H. DILWORTH, A. M.

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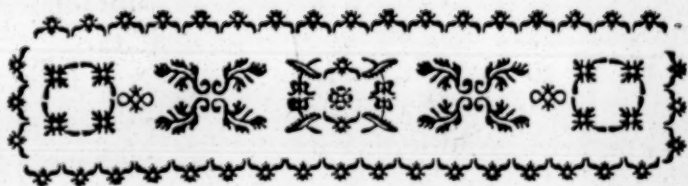


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THE  
ADVENTURES  
OF  
GIL BLAS  
De SANTILLANE.

IL BLAS DE SANTILLANE my father, having served a long time in the Spanish troops, retired at last to the city where he had been born.

There he married a poor burgher's daughter, a stale maid, on whom he begot unworthy me, who came into the world ten months after their marriage.

They soon after repaired to Oviedo, where my mother went to service as a chamber-maid, and my father as a groom. Having nothing to live upon but their wages, I should have been but badly off in point of education, if I had not had an uncle a canon of Oviedo. His

B

name

name was Gil Perez: he was my mother's elder brother, and my god-father besides.

Figure to yourself, courteous reader, a little man three feet and a half high, extraordinarily fat, with his head sunk between his shoulders; such was my uncle. In short, he was one of those ecclesiastics whose only care is to live well, which his benefice, being a good one, enabled him to do.

He brought me home when a child to his house, charging himself with the care of my education. Pleas'd with my sprightliness, he was determin'd that my mind should be properly cultivated: he therefore bought me a horn-book, taught me the alphabet, to spell, and to read; which kind care to his nephew, proved of some service to himself, for having neglected his reading for a long time, he recovered it by instructing me, and soon became in a condition of reading his breviary very currently, which he had never done before.

He had also a strong inclination to instruct me in the Latin, which if he could have done, it would have been the saving of some money to him: but alas, my good uncle Gil Perez was of such invincible dulness, as never to have been able to learn the first rudiments of grammar. He was perhaps (which however, indeed, I cannot advance as an absolute fact) the most ignorant canon of all his chapter.

It was not to his learning that he owed his preferment, but to the patronage of some good-natured nuns, who, in return for the many discreet

discreet and friendly offices he had rendered them, made interest to have him ordained a priest without undergoing any examination.

He resolved to put me under the rod of a schoolmaster, and in consequence sent me to doctor Godinez, the most celebrated pedagogue in Oviedo.

I made so great a progress, that at the end of five or six years I understood the Greek authors pretty well, and was a master of the Latin poets. I also applied closely to logic, by which I was taught the art of reasoning: nay, I was become so enamoured of disputing, as to stop all who went by, known or unknown, in order to propose arguments to them.

I was never so happy as when I got into a dispute with one of the lean tribe of Aristotle. How poor common sense used to suffer in the debate! Good heaven, what gestures! what grimaces! what writhing of our features! we foamed at the mouth, and our eyes were kindled with rage. All sober people must rather have taken us for demoniacs than philosophers.

By such proceedings I acquired the reputation of being learned in Oviedo; which my uncle heard with great pleasure, foreseeing that thereby I should not long be a burden to him; and thus he broke his mind to me one day:

“ Consider now, my dear nephew Gil Blas,  
 “ that your boyish days are over. You are  
 “ now seventeen years of age, and have a  
 “ tolerable share of learning, it is proper that  
 B 2 “ you

“ you should think of pushing yourself in the  
“ world : for which end, it is my advice that  
“ you set out without loss of time for the uni-  
“ versity of Salamanca ; for with the parts you  
“ have, you cannot miss of preferment.

“ I shall furnish you with a few ducats to  
“ defray the expence of the journey thither ;  
“ nay, I will also make you a present of my  
“ mule, that I assure you is worth twelve  
“ pistoles ; and which you may dispose of at  
“ Salamanca, and live upon the purchase mo-  
“ ney, until such time as you shall get an em-  
“ ployment at the said university.”

My uncle could not have proposed any thing more to my mind, for I had a longing desire to travel and see the world. I took care, however, to conceal my joy, and seemed so affected at parting from my uncle, to whom I declared myself under such mighty obligations, that the good man, moved by the part I played, gave me more money than he would have done, had he been able to read the bottom of my heart.

I also went to take leave of my poor father and mother, who gave me abundance of good advice. They bid me above all things to pray for my uncle, to keep no bad company, and never to make free with the property of another. After having made me a very long and tedious exhortation, they gave me their blessing, the only thing they could.

That ceremony over I mounted my mule, and rode away from Oviedo, pursuing the  
road



road to Penasler. What a happy dog was I then, riding at my ease through the country, master of myself and actions; of a mule, an indifferent one indeed, and forty ducats; besides a few reals I had stolen from my much-honoured uncle.

Indulging my own thoughts, I let my mule go just as the animal pleased; for having thrown the bridle on its neck, I drew the ducats out of my pocket, and was pleased at telling them over and over in my hat. In short, there is no expressing my joy on the occasion, for in all my life before I had never been master of such a treasure. There was no end to my pleasure of looking on and feeling it.

I was counting over my sum I believe the twentieth time at least, when all on a sudden my mule raising its head, and pricking up its ears, stopped in the middle of the road. I fancying that something had terrified the beast, looked about to see what it might be; and lo! I discovered on the ground a hat turned upside down, in which were a pair of beads of the larger size. At the same time I heard uttered with a voice of lamentation, "Noble traveller, have pity upon a poor maimed soldier; throw whatever charity your honour shall please into that hat. You will be rewarded for it in the other world."

I immediately turned my eyes to the side from whence the voice came, and saw under a bush twenty or thirty paces distant from me, a

fort of a soldier-looking man, who on two crutches had levelled a long fowling-piece at me.

At such a sight my heart quailed on account of the church treasure I was like to lose. I stopt, and thrust the ducats immediately into my pocket, from whence I drew out some reals, and approaching near to the hat, always ready to receive the charity of frighten'd christians, I dropt them in one after another, to shew his soldiership that I acted nobly by him.

He appeared very well satisfied with my generosity, and in return gave me as many blessings as I gave kicks on the side of my mule, in order to get as fast and as far as I could from such a terrifying mendicant; but the sluggish animal made not a whit the more speed in complaisance to my impatience. It had been so long accustomed to a creeping walk under my uncle, that it had quite forgot to gallop.

This adventure prognosticated but very badly for my journey, especially when I reflected that I had yet a great way to Salamanca, and that some other mishap might befall me. I thought it was very imprudent of my uncle not to have given me into some mule-driver's care, which certainly he ought to have done. But his notion, no doubt, was, that the giving his mule to me, would make the expence of the journey lighter, never dreaming of any danger I might be liable to on the road.

But



But in order to rectify my uncle's error, I resolved that as soon as I should arrive at Penasler, I would sell the mule, and travel under the safe convoy of a mule-driver as far as Astorga, and afterwards continue in the same manner from that place to Salamanca.

Although I had never been at any distance from Oviedo before, I nevertheless knew the names of all the towns I was to pass through, of which I took care to be informed before I set out. But as fortune would have it, I arrived safely at Penasler, and put up at an inn that had a very good appearance.

I had no sooner alighted, than the landlord came to receive me in a very courteous manner. He took off my cloak-bag himself, and carrying it on his shoulders, conducted me to a chamber. One of his servants, in the mean time led my mule to the stable.

This innkeeper was the most notorious gossip in all Asturias, and as prompt to relate all his own affairs without being asked, as curious to know those of other people. He told me his name was Andrew Corcuelo; that he had served a long time in the king's troops in the quality of serjeant, and that about fifteen months ago he quitted the service, to marry one of Castropol's daughters, who, though much tanned, was a tempting morsel. He told us a number of other things, that I would rather he had let alone.

Having made me the confident of his secrets, he thought himself entitled in conse-

quence to know my mind, and asked me who I was, whence I came, and whither I was going.

There was no avoiding answering every article, because he accompanied each question with a very profound respect, most humbly beseeching me at the same time to pardon his curiosity. Having got into a deep conversation with him, I told him my design of, and reasons for, selling my mule, in order to travel the rest of my journey with a mule-driver.

He approved my notion, and not in a succinct manner, for he entered into a minute detail of all the disagreeable accidents I might be liable to on the road. Nay, he recounted to me several tragic adventures that had happened to travellers. For my part, I imagined he would never have done.

However, he at last finished his tedious discourse, by informing me that if I were really inclined to sell my mule, he knew a very honest fellow who would become the purchaser. Upon my replying that I should like to deal with him, off ran the landlord to fetch him, and without being prayed.

He soon returned with his friend, whom he presented to me; at the same time extolling his probity. We three went into the yard, and had the mule brought out, which was made to pass and repass before the mule jockey, who, examining the brute from head to foot, found several faults with him.

I confess

I confess my mule was no object for panegyrick ; but had he been the best in the pope's stable, this nice scrutinist would have found something to blame. He declared, it had the faults that species of brutes are liable to ; and, to affirm the truth of his assertions, applied to the landlord, who had his private reasons for backing him. In consequence, I sold my mule for a very trifle ; for three ducats.

My landlord's next kind office was to go with me to a muleteer, who was to set out next morning for Astorga. Upon a bargain struck between us, he said he would come himself to awaken me betimes. As we returned to my landlord's house, he amused me on the way with the history of the muleteer, and other equally interesting subjects.

I was happily relieved from his impertinence by the approach of a genteel looking person, who addressed Corcueto the landlord in a very civil manner. I left them together, without having the least suspicion of my being the subject of their discourse.

I had no sooner entered the inn, than I called for my supper. It being a fast day, the answer was, I could have nothing but eggs. As soon as they were dressed, I sat down at table by myself ; but had scarce put the first bit in my mouth, when in came the landlord, accompanied by the very person that I had seen accost him in the street. He seemed to be above thirty years of age, and had a long sword by his side.

I was not a little surpris'd at his coming up to, and accosting me thus, "Most learned  
" young gentleman, I have this moment learn-  
" ed that you are the celebrated Gil Blas de  
" Santillane, the ornament of Oviedo, and  
" the great luminary of philosophy. Is it  
" possible that so young a man as you can be  
" so learned as the world gives out?" Then  
turning from me to the people of the house,  
he said, "Good folks, you do not well know  
" what a treasure you possess to-night. In  
" this young gentleman you see the eighth  
" wonder of the world."—Strait with affect-  
ed transports he threw his arms about my  
neck, praying me at the same time to excuse  
his excess of joy at seeing me.

As soon as I had disentangled myself from  
his embraces, and recovered breath, he having  
almost stifled me with kindness, I made him  
a modest answer, and suitable to the occasion:  
but that served only to provoke his panegyric,  
and that to such a violent degree, as, had I  
not been quite unexperienced in the world, I  
must have seen through the cheat. But my  
youth and vanity made a meer gudgeon of me,  
and I took in so friendly a part all he had been  
pleased to say, as to think it incumbent to in-  
vite him to sit down and sup with me.

"With all my heart," replied my admirer,  
of whom I had conceived the highest opinion;  
"I look upon it as so lucky a hit to have met  
" Don Gil Blas de Santillane, that I should  
" be an enemy to myself not to protract the  
" said

“ said happiness as long as I can : wherefore,  
 “ good sir, although I have no manner of  
 “ appetite, I will sit down with you, and  
 “ merely by way of complaisance, eat a few  
 “ bits to keep you in countenance, as I know  
 “ it is irksome to many to eat alone.”

If I thought myself happy in this stranger's company, he was not in a less happy state at the pleasing sight and smell of a supper, which I believe was not a very common meal with him.

My panegyrist sat over against me. As soon as a napkin was brought to him, he fell in such a voracious manner upon the omelet, as if he had not eat for three days. By the polite manner he laid about him, I saw it would be soon devoured, therefore ordered a second, which was so quickly got ready as to be brought on the table when we, or rather he, had finished the first.

Notwithstanding his celerity in eating, which kept an equal pace, he vollied off compliment upon compliment at me, without doing the least wrong to his stomach. He was happy in eating, and I not less so in the praises he lavished on me.

He drank frequently ; one time to my health ; at another to that of my father or mother, whom he looked upon as the happiest couple in the world to have such a son as I was. He filled my glass every time insisting that I ought to do honour to his toasts.

I readily

I readily complied with his desire, by doing honour to the healths he gave, which, joined to his other adulations, put me in so good-natured a mood, as that seeing the second omelet was drawing near its end, I asked the landlord if we could not have some fish.

Gaffer Corcuélo, who very likely was in intelligence with the hungry parasite, answered briskly, "Yes, my noble master, I have an excellent trout, but it will come dear to those who shall eat it.—It is a tit bit, and above your cut."

"What do you mean, you rascal?" replied my flatterer to him in a resentful tone, "by a tit bit, and above your cut? you must surely have lost your common sense, you blockhead. Do you know, fellow, that you cannot have any thing in your house too good for so accomplished a young gentleman as Gil Blas de Santillane, who deserves to be treated like a prince."

I was highly pleased with his resenting the landlord's impertinent objection, and in so doing he had but prevented me; for I was so stung at Corcuélo's holding me cheap, that I huffingly bid him, "Serve up your trout, friend, and do not trouble yourself about any thing else."

The lurching scoundrel, who desired no better, set about getting it ready, and soon served it upon the table. I saw a glance of joy in my parasite's eyes on viewing the new dish: on which,



which, thro' an extraordinary effort of his politeness, he fell as violently as on the omelet.

He was, however, obliged to give up at last, for fear of a disagreeable accident, being perfectly gorged. Having eat and drunk as much as he could, he was resolved to put an end to the farce he was playing; therefore, getting up from the table, "Magnificent Gil Blas, said he, "being thoroughly satisfied with the  
 "good treat you have given me, I think myself bound in return to give you this important advice, which you seem to stand in need of. Be henceforward diffident of those  
 "who shall praise you. Be cautious how you act with, or unbosom yourself to strangers.

"You may hereafter meet with people who will divert themselves by imposing on your credulity, and push matters perhaps farther. Do not you be their dupe, nor believe yourself to be the eighth wonder of the world." Having finished his insulting advice, he laughed in my face and walked off.

I was as much affected by this impostor's treatment, as by any more serious disgrace that has since happened to me. I could not forgive my being so easily imposed on, or it was rather the unexpected humbling of my pride that had stung me to the quick. "This treacherous rascal," quoth I, has been making his game of me all the time; and in all probability this is a concerted affair between him and my landlord, and for this purpose it was that they spoke together.

"Ah!

" Ah, poor Gil Blas, thou shouldst died in  
 " with shame to have let thyself be an ob-burg  
 " ject of ridicule to two such varlets. They you  
 " will certainly cook up a fine story out of Ver  
 " the affair, which very possibly may reach each  
 " Oviedo, and be repeated there to my no whe  
 " great credit. My afflicted parents will re- T  
 " pent their having thrown away so much com  
 " advice upon a fool. Instead of advising me me  
 " not to cheat any body, they should have but  
 " counselled me not to let myself be cheated." lett  
 " to

Agitated by such mortifying thoughts, and  
 inflamed with indignation, I locked myself  
 up in my chamber, and flounced into bed.  
 But sleep I could not ; nor had I closed an eye,  
 when the mule-driver came to inform me, that  
 he only waited for me to set out.

I got up immediately, and as I was dressing  
 myself, Corcuero came into the room with a  
 bill of what I had, in which the trout cut  
 no small figure. I was not only obliged to  
 give him all he asked, but also to bear with  
 the scoundrel's scoffing at me, on account of  
 the adventure that had happened.

As soon as I had paid him for a supper  
 which I could not at any rate digest, I re-  
 paired to the mule-driver with my cloak-bag,  
 uttering hearty curses against the parasite, the  
 inn, and the landlord.

I had the pleasure to find that there was  
 other company besides me with the mule-driver,  
 to wit, two young gentlemen of Penafier, a  
 little chorister of Mondonnedo, who delight-  
 ed



st died in strolling about the country, and a young  
burgher of Astorga, then returning with his  
They young wife, whom he had just married at  
ut of Verco. We soon made acquaintance with  
each each other, every body cheerfully telling from  
y no whence he was come, and whither going.

l re- The new-married woman was of so black a  
much complexion, that she was quite untempting to  
g me me, therefore had no attraction for my eyes :  
have but her youth and plumpness smote the mu-  
d." letteer, who resolved to do all in his power  
and to obtain her good favour towards him.

yself He ruminated on this project all that day,  
bed. but deferred the execution of it to the last  
eye, night of the journey, which was to be at Ca-  
that cabelos. He made us alight at the first inn  
there, that was rather in the country than in  
the town. He had experienced the landlord  
to be a discreet and complaisant fellow.

His first care was to have us shewed into a  
remote chamber, where he let us sup in quiet.  
As we had just finished, he rushed in upon us  
in a furious manner, swearing, " 'Sdeath I  
" have been robbed. I had a hundred pistoles  
" in a leathern purse : I must have them again.  
" I'll this moment to the magistrate of the  
" town, who does not understand raillery in  
" such affairs. So, my honest folks, you must  
" all undergo the question, till such time as  
" you shall confess your crime, and return  
" the money." Having thus explained him-  
self in a tone of voice natural enough to a  
man who had been robbed, he went out of  
the

the room, where we remained in the greatest astonishment.

It never once came into our heads that all this might have been only a feint, because we did not sufficiently know each other. On my side, I suspected the little chorister, who, perhaps, had not a more favourable opinion of me. In fine, we were a parcel of young fools, and not knowing what formalities are observed in such cases, we apprehended that we should immediately be put into duresse.

Therefore as our fears dictated, we hurried out of the chamber, each taking a different way; one run to the street, another to the garden; every man of us strove to save himself as well as he could. Even the young burgher of Astorga was so scar'd at the thought of being put to the question, that he run off as Æneas had done from the flames of Troy, leaving his wife behind him.

But the muletteer, (as I have since learned) more incontinent than his mules, finding that his stratagem had succeeded according to his wish, went to make his boast of it to the new-married lady that was left alone, and pressed her to let him profit of the occasion. But this Lucretia of Asturias was so provoked by the insolence and ugliness of her woer, that she exerted her strength, and made a vigorous resistance, screaming aloud all the time.

The patrol happening at that juncture to be near the inn, which it knew to be an object worthy of its attention, entered to demand the

cause of the outcry they had heard. The landlord was singing in his kitchen, and pretended he heard none : but the commander of the patrol obliged him to shew them the chamber from whence the noise was heard.

They came in the very nick of time, for the poor Asturian lady was almost overcome. The captain of the patrol being a surly brutish chap, the moment he discovered the cause of the cries, without asking leave, let fly five or six blows of his halberd on the back of the amorous muleteer, using terms to the lecher as offensive to modesty, as the very deed he was about to perpetrate.

But the captain did not stop there : he had the culprit taken into custody, and carried before the judge of the place, whither also the lady plaintiff was conducted ; who, notwithstanding the disorder the fellow had thrown her into, was determined to go and demand immediate justice for the indignity which had been offered to her.

The judge heard her accusation with great attention, and having thoroughly considered her case, declared the culprit unworthy of pardon ; therefore ordered him to be stripped immediately, and whipped in her presence. He also added to his sentence, that if her husband should not be found the next day, two archers, at the sole expence of the delinquent muleteer, should conduct her in safety to the city of Astorga.

For my part, more terrified than all the rest were, I ran quite wild about the country, scampering through fields, thickets, and jumping over every impediment I met in my way, till at last I had got near a forest, into which I was going to plunge, in order to hide myself among the thickest bushes.

But this design was prevented by two men on horseback presenting themselves before me. They cried out, "Who goes there?" Disabled by the surprize I was in to make them an immediate answer, they came up to me, each cocking a pistol to my breast. They commanded me to tell them who I was, from whence I came, whither going, what business I had in the forest; and charged me not to conceal any thing from them.

In order to answer their several interrogatories, which had pretty near the same effect upon me as the question the muleteer had threatened to regale us with, I told them with a trembling voice, that I was a young man of Oviedo going to Salamanca. I then related to them my late alarm at the inn, and that I had run to the place they met me, that I might escape being put to the question.

The simplicity of my answer made my examiners burst into a fit of laughter. "Courage, my lad," said one of the two, "dismiss your fears; come along with us, we will put you in a place of safety." He then made me get up behind him on his horse, and away they rode deep into the forest.

I did

I did not know what to make of this encounter ; I however imagined that it would rather end in good than evil ; for thus I reasoned with myself, “ If these two were highwaymen, they would have robbed, and perhaps murdered me : but by their kind treatment of me, they must be worthy gentlemen of the country, who seeing me so terrified, have, from a motive of charity, taken me under their care.”

I was not let to remain long in doubt, for after having made some windings with great silence and caution, we came to the foot of a hill, where we alit. Then one of the two informed me, “ This, my lad, is our dwelling-place.”

I looked all round, but could not perceive either house or cottage, or any the least apology for a place of residence. In the mean time my two new friends raised up a large wooden trap covered with turf and brambles, that concealed the entrance of a long, sloping, subterraneous alley, into which the horses immediately dived, being long accustomed to it.

My dismounted guides made me descend along with them, then pulled down the trap, which they made fast with cords fixed for that purpose ; and thus, O courteous reader, was the nephew of Gil Perez, the honest canon, taken like a mouse in a mouse trap.

I immediately found what kind of gentry I was associated with, and my former fears were now expelled by the present one, and almost



most all my faculties were suspended. I concluded that I should lose both my life and ducats. Therefore looking upon myself as a victim ready to be sacrificed upon the altar, I advanced between my two conductors, more like a dead than a living man; who, on perceiving I trembled, desired me to fear nothing, but their advice was all to no purpose.

When we had made about two hundred paces turning and winding, but still descending, we entered into a stable illumined by two large iron lamps suspended from the cieling. There was plenty of straw, and several barrels full of barley. Twenty horses might lie commodiously there, but then there happened to be but the two belonging to our company.

A negro, vigorous though in years, fastened them to the manger. From the stable we proceeded by the scanty light of some other lamps, whose starved glare was but just sufficient to reveal the horrors of the place, to the kitchen, where an old woman was broiling some meat on the fire, and preparing supper.

The kitchen was decorated with all necessary utensils, and near it was a larder well furnished with all sorts of provision. The cook, (whose person I think well worthy of being described) was above sixty years of age. In her youth her hair had been of a very strong sandy colour, for her locks were not as yet so much snowed over by age, but some tincts of the original colour appeared here and there.

Besides

Besides the dark olive colour of her complexion, she had a sharp-pointed chin, with deep sunk lips, over which descended a monstrous aquiline nose. Her eyes were ornamented with broad scarlet rings. One of them, as he presented me to this angel of darkness, thus addressed her: " Dame Leonarda, here is a handsome young fellow we bring to you:" Then turning to, and observing me quite pale and terrified, he bid me not to be afraid, saying, that no evil should befall me with them: that having wanted a valet to assist their cook, it was my good fortune to have been found by them, and thus continued he in great kindness:

" You shall have the place that a young man had here, who died about fifteen days ago. He was a lad of a very delicate complexion; but you appear of a more robust constitution, will endure fatigue better, and consequently not die so soon.

" The truth is, that you will not see the sun in haste again; but in return you shall live well, and have a good fire. You will pass your time here agreeably with Leonarda, who is one of the best-natured creatures alive. You shall have every thing here you can desire. Do not imagine you are in a den of beggars:" which to prove he took a torch in his hand, and bid me follow him.

He brought me into a cellar, where I saw a great quantity of bottles, and earthen pots well corked, and which he told me were all full of

an excellent wine. He made me afterwards pass through several chambers, in some of which were pieces of cloth, in others woollen and silken stuffs.

I discovered in a cave gold and silver, and a deal of plate with different arms thereon. I afterwards followed him into a spacious salon, that was illuminated by three brass sconces, and served as a communication to other chambers.

There he asked me a few questions, as what was my name, and why I had left Oviedo. As soon as I had satisfied his curiosity he replied, "Well, Gil Blas, since you have quit-  
"ted the place of your nativity in order to  
"get a good post for life, you must have been  
"born under a lucky star, to have fallen into  
"our hands. I told you so at first. You will  
"live here in plenty, may roll in gold and  
"silver, and all that in safety; for the en-  
"trance to this subterraneous abode is known  
"but to me and my comrades; and can never  
"be discovered, were the officers of justice  
"to come ever so often in quest of us. I have  
"followed this way of life fifteen years. My  
"name is Rolando, and I am captain of the  
"band."

He had just finished what he had to say to me, when six new faces appeared in the salon. It was the lieutenant returned with five of the troop, who had brought in a good booty, to wit, two hampers full of sugar, cinnamon, pepper, figs, almonds, &c.



The lieutenant informed the captain that he had taken them from a grocer of Benevento, and his mule also. Having given an exact account of his expedition at the bureau, the spoil was brought into the office. They then turned all their thoughts to jollity.

A large table being spread in the salon, I was dispatched to gammer Leonarda, that she might instruct me in my new office. I was obliged to yield to necessity, seeing my hard fate would have it so, and silently devouring my grief, prepared in the best manner I could to serve the worthy company.

I began by setting out the beaufet, on which I ranged in order the silver goblets, and several earthen bottles filled with that excellent wine Rolando had so highly extolled.

I afterwards served up two ragouts, which were no sooner on the table than the company seated themselves. They fell to with a very good appetite, and I waited behind in order to help them with wine; of which I acquitted myself so well, as to deserve all their compliments on that head.

The captain told them my story; that I was a lad of merit, and that there was no danger to praise me to my face. They all joined in saying very civil things to me, and kindly concluded that I seemed to have been born purposely to serve as their butler, and that I was infinitely preferable to my predecessor in that office; since whose death Leonarda had the honour of presenting their nectar to those infernal

fernal deities ; which from that time they deprived her of, and invested me with : thus become a new Ganimedes, I succeeded to this old and deformed Hebe.

A large piece of roast-meat served up after the ragout, blunted the edge of the company's appetites, who having drunk in proportion to their eating, were all become of a merry mood, and in consequence very noisy.

They set a jabbering all together ; one begins to tell a story, another recounts a bon mot, a third roars like a Bacchanalian, a fourth falls a singing. In so confused a noise nothing distinct could be heard.

Rolando at length wearied with the noisy scene, in which he had no small share, though to little purpose, spoke in a tone of voice to impose silence on the rest : “ Gentlemen, give  
 “ attention to the proposition I make to you.  
 “ Instead of deafening each other by speaking  
 “ all together, would it not be much better, if  
 “ we were to converse like rational beings.  
 “ There is a thought come into my head which  
 “ may afford us some entertainment.

“ Since we have been together, we have  
 “ never had the curiosity to enquire the history  
 “ of each other's family, and by what series  
 “ of adventures we were brought to our present profession ; and this gentleman appears  
 “ to me a subject well worthy of being known.  
 “ Therefore let us with a mutual confidence  
 “ make each in our turn a candid narrative  
 “ for

“ for the general amusement of the company  
 “ present.”

The lieutenant and the others, as if they had some very clever adventures to relate, accepted with warm demonstrations of joy their captain Rolando's proposition; who, in humble deference to his rank, was complimented with taking the lead, and he chearfully told them the story of his life.

From their respective narratives it was not at all surprising to see them associated. They then talked promiscuously of other matters relative to their profession, and what plan they should put next in execution. After which they rose from table, and retired to their beds, whither each lighted himself with a bougie.

I attended captain Rolando to his chamber, who, whilst I helped to undress him, said to me, “ Now, friend Gil Blas, you have seen  
 “ how we live; always in pleasure. Hatred or  
 “ envy can get no footing amongst us. We  
 “ have never the least dispute. There is  
 “ more harmony among us than is to be found  
 “ in any convent of friars.

“ Thou wilt lead a fine life here, my lad,  
 “ for I do not think thee so great a blockhead,  
 “ as to have any scruple to live with robbers.  
 “ For after all, does not the generality of  
 “ mankind rob as essentially as we do? yes,  
 “ Gil Blas, every man desires to appropriate  
 “ to himself his neighbour's goods, if he  
 “ can.”

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C

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“ This sentiment is universal amongst the  
“ human species ; the only difference is in the  
“ manner of carrying it into execution. Con-  
“ querors, for example, seize on the domi-  
“ nions of their neighbours. People of fa-  
“ shion borrow money with an intent of ne-  
“ ver returning it. Bankers, treasurers, dea-  
“ lers in exchange, clerks and merchants,  
“ whether in wholesale or retale, are not very  
“ liable to scruples.”

“ There is no necessity to enter into any de-  
“ tail about the officers appointed for the ex-  
“ ecution of justice, it being pretty generally  
“ known what their practice is. It must,  
“ however, be confessed that they act more  
“ humanely than we do ; for we often take  
“ away the life of the innocent, and they  
“ save that of the guilty.”

As soon as Rolando had put an end to this apology for his profession, he went to bed ; and I returned to the salon, in order to take away the table, and settle every thing in its proper place. That done, I went into the kitchen, where Domingo (that was the name of the old negro) and Leonarda who were at supper, said they had waited for me.

I sat down with them, although I had no appetite. I found I could not eat, and those two equally engaging figures observing my sadness, attempted to comfort me. “ Why afflict yourself thus, my son ? ” said the old beldam. “ You should rather return thanks  
“ to Providence for your being here. You are  
“ young,

“ young, and seem to be of a very pliant disposition. You would soon be lost in the world, wicked as it is at present. You would meet with libertine companions, that would make you give into all sorts of debauchery : whereas here your innocence is in a port of safety.”

“ Leonarda says true,” added the old negroe in a grave tone. “ Besides, what is there to be met with in the world but trouble? offer then your thanks to heaven, young man, for being at once delivered from all the perils, difficulties and afflictions life is exposed to.”

I bore their discourse quietly, because it would have been of no service to me to resent it. Domingo at length having eaten and drunk sufficiently, retired to his stable.

Leonarda took a lamp in her hand, and conducted me into a den, the burial-place of all the robbers who died naturally. There was fixed a kind of hutch-bed, that had more the look of a tomb than of any thing else. “ This is your bed-chamber, friend,” said my guide.

“ The young man whose place you have the honour and happiness to fill, slept there as long as he lived, and reposes under it after death. He let himself pine away in the very flower of his age. Be not you so great a simpleton as to follow his example.” Having finished her odious discourse,

she gave me the lamp, and returned to her kitchen.

I put the lamp on the ground, and threw myself into this kind of sepulchral bed, not so much to enjoy the sweets of rest, as to ruminate upon my unhappy situation. “ Good  
“ heaven,” quoth I, “ what destiny so cruel  
“ as mine ! To be thus deprived of the light  
“ of day ; to be thus buried alive at the age  
“ of eighteen ! to be the menial servant of  
“ robbers, with whom I am condemned to  
“ pass my days ; and for additional comfort  
“ my nights with the dead !”

These bitter and mortifying thoughts drew from me a shower of tears. I curst a thousand times my uncle’s scheme of sending me to Salamanca. I sincerely repented my having been so much afraid of the justice of Cacabelos, and wished to be there, though undergoing the question.

But when I considered that this was consuming myself to no purpose in vain complaints, I began to think on some means of escaping. “ Sure,” said I to myself, “ it is  
“ not impossible to get out of this place.  
“ The robbers are now fast asleep, and so  
“ anon will be the negroe and Leonarda :  
“ then may not I, by the light of this lamp,  
“ find the long alley by which I descended  
“ into this hell ? It is too true, I fear, I have  
“ not strength enough to raise the trap that  
“ covers the entrance to it ; but let me try,  
“ however. I am resolved to have nothing  
“ to



“ to reproach myself with : my desperate situation will perhaps furnish me with strength sufficient, and I may perhaps make my escape.”

Having formed this great design, I got up as soon as I believed Leonarda and Domingo were asleep.

I took the lamp, and stole on tip-toe from my dungeon, recommending myself to all the saints in paradise. I had some difficulty to find out the windings of this new labyrinth. However, I got to the door of the stable, and discovered the long alley I was in quest of, I tript lightly along with a heart full of joy, in hopes of coming soon to the trap.

But alas, how great was my disappointment at meeting in the middle of the alley an iron gate made fast, and whose bars were so close to each other, there was no getting my hand between them. I was quite dejected by this new obstacle, which I had not seen as I was brought in, because it then lay open.

As I was making every effort in my power to force it open, I felt a volley of strokes with a bull's pizzle on my back. I roared so loud, that all the subterraneous realm was alarmed thereat. Looking behind me I saw the old negroe in his shirt, who held in one hand a dark lanthorn, and in the other the instrument of my punishment.

“ So, so, my pretty master,” said he, “ you want to make your escape ; but do not think it in your power to steal a march upon me.

“ I heard all your movements. You expected  
“ to be sure, to find the iron grate open : but  
“ learn, spark, that henceforwards, upon your  
“ account, it shall be kept more closely shut.  
“ When we detain any persons here against  
“ their will, they must be cunning shavers in-  
“ deed, if they can get off from us.”

In consequence of my loud cries, two or three of the robbers were come up to us, not knowing but it might be the officers of justice in pursuit of them. They alarmed their companions, and every man put himself in a posture of defence : but as they learned the real cause, they fell a laughing, made a jest of my affliction, and threatened to flea me alive, if ever I should make another attempt to escape.

The robbers returned to their beds. The old negroe hied to his stable, highly pleased with what he had done : and I, poor pill-garlick sneaked to my sepulchral retreat, where I passed the night in sighs and tears. For a few days after I thought I should die with grief ; at best I only led a living death : but at last my good genius inspired me to dissemble, which I did, by appearing every day to lose somewhat of my sadness.

Nay, I counterfeited so well, that even Leonarda and Domingo were deceived. They concluded that the bird was grown accustomed to the cage ; nay, Rolando and his companions began to think so too, for as I poured out their wine to them, I affected to be droll, which I found pleased them all.

I so-

I solicited the honour of being permitted to partake of their dangers in the field of action, that I might render myself worthy of becoming one of their illustrious corps. My view was thereby to have an opportunity of escaping.

The request did not displease them : however, they did not think proper to grant it immediately, in order to make a farther trial of my sincerity. In about six months after, I was brought out upon some of their expeditions, and received by them as an equal ; consequently relieved from waiting on them any longer. So the office of serving wine at table devolved again to Leonarda by my promotion. They took off my worn-out dress, and accoutred me in the cloaths of a gentleman lately robbed, and all necessary arms. They mounted me on the same gentleman's horse. From my long disuse, my eyes at first were hurt a little with the light of day, but that soon went off.

I was with them on several of their parties, still hoping an opportunity of escaping. In the last I was with them a horrible slaughter was committed. Four gentlemen who travelled on horseback, and one in a coach with a lady, were overpowered and killed by our troop, consisting of nine, which in the action lost but one, an apostate ecclesiastic.

Having left the stripped bodies on the road, we brought off their chests, portmanteaus and horses, with every thing that was of value, and the lady, who was in a swoon.

At our return every man was obliged to take care of his own horse, and the newly-acquired ones, because the old negroe had lain sick a bed for three days. Besides a violent attack of the gout, the rheumatism added to his sufferings. He had lost the use of all his limbs; he could move nothing but his tongue, and that to utter his impatience by most blasphemous outcries.

We heeded not the miscreant, but leaving him to swear and blaspheme as much as he pleased, we went to the kitchen to take care of the lady, who, after some time recovered from her fainting fit. But as soon as she discovered herself to be in the hands of strangers, and such ill-looking ones too, she felt all the horror of her situation, and raised her bright eyes, in which terror and despair were painted as it were to reproach Providence for the cruel disgrace she was exposed to. Overpowered by a rapid succession of ideas, each more terrible than the other, she fainted away again, and the ruffians were all alarmed lest death should rob them of their prey. Rolando judging it more proper to leave her to herself, than to harass her with disagreeable offers of service, ordered her to be carried to Leonarda's bed, where she lay abandoned to whatever might happen.

Having taken a view of our rich spoil, and talked over the action of the day, we all went to supper in great joy, and it was resolved to set out next morning for Manilla; where we  
imagined

imagined the affair could not have been heard, to sell part of our booty. We then went to see how the lady was, whom we found in the same situation, a scarce breathing monument of despair.

Though the poor lady seemed rather dead than alive, some of the gang looked on her with lascivious looks that betrayed their brutal desires, which they would have satisfied, if not hindered by Rolando, who remonstrated to them, that they should wait for her recovery from out of her present situation, in which she was deprived of all sentiment.

The respect they had for their leader made them defer their lustful designs. Nothing less than the awe of him could have preserved the lady's honour. It is a doubt with me, whether even death would have protected her beautiful person from their brutality.

We left the unhappy lady a prey to her anguish and Leonarda's care, which was Rolando's order, then all retired to bed; wherein I had no sooner entered, than instead of inclining to sleep, I bent all my thoughts on the lady's distressful situation, and the indignities she must undergo from such scoundrels; which I set about thinking how I should rescue her from, and to make my escape at the same time.

It struck me that the old negroe was bed-ridden, and that since his malady Leonarda was entrusted with the key of the iron grate. My heart swelled with joy at the thought, and I began

began to conceive sanguine hopes of succeeding in my stratagem, which I put in execution in the following manner.

I pretended to have a violent cholick, and filled all our lower regions with groans and lamentations. The robbers started all from their beds, and ran to me, to know what was the matter. I told them I had a most terrible cholick; and to impose the better on them, I gnashed my teeth, and writhed my body about in a most horrible manner: then I lay quiet for a while, as if the fit was over, but soon after roared more horribly than ever, and played variety of convulsions.

In fine, I acted the cholic so well, that the robbers not only believed, but seemed affected with my situation, and brought me all the relief they could; one cramming brandy down my throat, another rubbing the skin off my belly with hot towels, &c. which made me suffer in earnest: but in order to put an end to their torturing kindness, I told them I found myself better.

This farce having lasted above three hours, and the robbers judging that it was near day, prepared to set out for Manilla. I pretended to be very desirous of making one of their party; but they all voted against it on account of my indisposition, lest it should seize me on the road, which I affected to be sorry for.

When they were gone off, I set about executing my scheme. Up got I, took my sword and pistols, went to the kitchen, where I found

Leonarda



Leonarda comforting the distressed lady in her impertinent manner, quite offensive to chaste ears. I cocked a pistol at her head, and told her I would blow her brains out, unless she would instantly give me up the key of the grate, which her fear made her do without hesitation. I then addressed the afflicted lady, "Behold, Madam, heaven in me has sent you a deliverer; rise and follow me: I will conduct you whither you shall desire." The lady hoping I would protect her honour, (upon which I bid her be quite easy) followed me as well as she could.

With a cord I tied Leonarda to a large table in the kitchen, threatening to kill her if she should make the least noise: I then lit a bougie, and went with the lady into the room where the gold and silver specie lay. I put as much gold into my pockets as they could contain, desiring the lady to do as much, I removed all her scruples, by informing her that it was her own.

Having furnished ourselves with a sufficient store of cash, I went to the stable with my pistols cock'd; but indeed from the negroe's indisposition I apprehended no resistance there: for had he offered the least, I should for ever have cured him of his gout and rheumatism. But he was so tormented with his pain, that I brought my horse out of the stable without his even perceiving it.

The lady waited for me at the door; we hurried our way up the alley that led from the under-

under-ground habitation, opened the grate, and soon reached the trap. It was with much difficulty that we raised it, which we never could have done but with the extraordinary strength supplied by the desire of saving ourselves.

Day began to appear as soon as we had emerged from that infernal abyss, which we made off from as fast as we could. I got on horseback, the lady behind me; away we galloped along the first road that presented itself to us, and were soon clear of the forest. I was sometimes apprehensive lest leading us to Manilla, we should meet Rolando, or any of his banditti. But luckily things happened otherwise, for that road leading to Astorga, we reached there about two o'clock in the afternoon.

I observed all the folk staring at us, as if it had been a new sight for them to see a woman riding behind a man. We put up at the first inn, where I ordered a partridge and a young rabbit to be roasted.

While dinner was getting ready, the lady and I being shewed into a room, we began to discourse each other, which we could not do on the road, on account of the swift rate we came at. She declared the mighty obligation she was under to me for having snatched her from such imminent danger; and that she could not believe me, by inclination, an associate with such barbarous ruffians.

I related to her the history of my life, and by what accident I fell in among them, which

con-

confirmed the good opinion she had already conceived of me.

I then assured her that she might with safety make me a confidant of her adventures, which she kindly consented to: at the winding up I learned that her husband and three friends had been the four gentlemen murdered by the robbers.

Our conversation was interrupted by a sudden noise of people rushing up stairs. It was the Corregidor and his escorte, who without any ceremony came into our chamber. By the declaration of a young gentleman with him (who had been lately robbed by our gang) that it was his coat I had on, the lady and myself were taken into custody, but lodged separately.

The corregidor and his people having stripped me from top to toe, by way of precaution they deprived me with great transport of all the money I took from the robbers, and also of the forty ducats my uncle had given me, bidding me at the same time not to despair. They then left me thus plundered, on the straw, to indulge my melancholy reflections.

All the nurture I got was some brown bread and water. I saw but the jailor, who brought me every morning my day's provision. The surly rogue would never answer me any question I put to him.

At the expiration of three weeks, in consequence of the favourable report given of my innocence, by the lady, and of other concurring

ing circumstances, the corregidor came to the prison and spoke to me in pretty near these terms.

“ Gil Blas, being persuaded, at length, of  
“ your having been wrongfully accused, and  
“ that you may no longer languish in confinement, I am come to let you free. You  
“ may go out as soon as you please; but suppose we should accompany you into the  
“ forest, might you not be able to discover this  
“ subterraneous retreat to us.”

“ No, please your worship,” answered I,  
“ because I was brought to it in the night, and  
“ made my escape from it before day, I should  
“ not know the place again:” upon which the corregidor withdrew, saying, that he had given orders to the jailor to let me out, who came soon after into my den with one of the door-keepers of the prison; they let me out but in a very wretched trim.

I determined to go to Burgos, where the lady I had delivered then resided. I was but barely enabled to pursue my way thither in a scanty manner, by the benefaction of a few reals from a former acquaintance. On account of my sorry attire, I met with some indignities on the road. Being informed that Donna Mercia was retired to a convent, I went thither, and prayed the door-keeper to be so kind as to inform her ladyship that a young man just released from the prison of Asterga, earnestly desired the honour of speaking to her.

She

She went as requested, and at her return desired me to walk into the parlour, where I had not long remained, before I saw appear at the gate and all in mourning Donna Mercia, who smiling graciously on me, said, "I am glad to see you, young man," then observing my confusion on account of my shameful desabille, she pray'd, that might not in the least embarrass me, and drew out of her pocket a purse which she gave me, containing one hundred ducats, in order to buy a decent apparel, and desired me to revisit her. She did not mean to limit her gratitude for my services to that sum.

I returned her ladyship a thousand thanks, and swore I would not leave Burgos without calling to see her. I went streight to an inn in order to regale myself, nay, make myself respected by the display of my cash, till such time as I could be fitted with a suit of cloaths to my liking.

I sent for a merchant taylor who dealt in cloaths ready made, he came to me with two of his men carrying each a large bundle of cloaths of different colours, which both he and they exposed for my inspection, with a most obsequious politeness. I chose a very shewy one of blue velvet laced with gold, for which I gave sixty ducats.

I afterwards bought linnen, a hat, silk stockings, neat shoes, and a sword. With what pleasure did I contemplate myself decked out in this new attire! No peacock had ever so fondly

fondly admired the beauty of his feathers. Thus equipped I paid a second visit to Donna Mercia, who received me in a most gracious manner, and thanked me again for the great service I had rendered to her, upon which several compliments passed on both sides.

Her ladyship then wishing me all sort of prosperity, bid me adieu, and retired without making me any other present than a ring of about thirty pistoles value, which she desired me to keep carefully in remembrance of her. I own I looked a little surprized at receiving no greater present from her hands, and being a little dissatisfied returned to my inn, where, as I entered, I was overtaken by a man following close at my heels, who throwing his cloak open, let me see a large packet under his arm, which having the appearance of being fraught with specie, I stared thereon, as did several people standing near us. I fancied that I heard the voice of a seraphim, when this man, laying his packet on the table, said, "noble Gil Blas, this is a present to you from Donna Maria."

In return, I treated the carrier of the said packet with the most profound politeness, and the minute he departed from me, I flew as eagerly as a falcon does to his prey to the packet, which I carried off to my chamber in order to tell over the contents free from all interruption. I found a thousand ducats, and just reckoned them, when the landlord, who had overheard what the bearer of them said, was  
come



come through a spirit of curiosity, to hear what might be the contents of the said packet.

He was struck with the sight of so much money spread on the table. "Good heaven," exclaimed he, "what a treasure!" then added with a sly leer, "Sir, you must be a great favourite of the ladies; you are not as yet four and twenty hours at Burgos, and you have already some of our ladies under contribution." My youthful vanity being pleased with what my conscience knew to be a lie, I did not at first take any pains to undeceive him, till I found its remorses too powerful to be resisted, then I told the landlord the history of that lady's acquaintance with me.

Having, by my landlord's advice, who flattered my vanity in all he had said to me, resolved to go and try my fortune at Madrid, I next morning bought two fine mules for the journey, and hired a servant of his recommendation, a native of Galicia, called Ambrose de Lamela, who appeared to be a disinterested, plain, and devout man. Having purchased boots and a portmanteau to pack up my cloaths and cash in, I paid my landlord his bill, and before the dawn of day set out from Burgos on my way to Madrid.

The first night of our journey we lodged at Duenas, and put up at Valladolid the second day about four o'clock in the afternoon. The inn we stopp'd at seemed to be the best of the city. I left the care of my mules to my servant, and went up stairs to a chamber, whither

ther I had my portmanteau carried by one of the servants of the inn. Being very much fatigued I threw myself upon the bed, without having my boots pulled off, and falling imperceptibly asleep, I did not awake till towards night.

As I awoke I called for my valet Ambrose de Lamela, who was not then in the house, but soon came in. I asked him where he had been? he told me with a very pious countenance, "that he had been at the next church "to offer up his thanks to Providence, for "having conducted us in safety from Burgos "to Valladolid." I approved of his devotion, and desired him to order a fowl to be roasted for my supper.

As I was giving him this order, the landlord of the house came into my chamber, carrying a flambeau in his hand, to light a lady most beautiful and young, and most magnificently dressed. She leaned on an elderly gentleman, and her train was held up by a little Moor.

I was not a little surprized, when this lady, after making a most profound courtsey, asked if my name was not Don Gil Blas de Santillane. The moment I replied in the affirmative, she quitted her attendant 'squire, and ran up to embrace me with such transport of joy, as added to my astonishment.

"I cannot be sufficiently thankful to heaven," said she, "for this lucky adventure.

"Is

Is it then the noble Gil Blas? you are the very person I seek for."

Ignorant of the cause of such fine and warm protestations, I remembered me of my parasite Penafior, and behaved shy, suspecting her ladyship to be one of the sharpening tribe, till the sequel of her discourse made me alter my opinion. "I am," added she, "a cousin german of Donna Mercia de Mosquera, who is so greatly obliged to you for the signal service you have done her. I have this very morning received a letter from her, which informs me of your going to Madrid, and entreats that I should make much of you, in case that you were to pass through Valladolid."

"I have been these two hours past running from one end of the city to the other, from inn to inn, enquiring if any strangers were arrived who might answer to the description given of you. By the satisfactory answer I received from the host of this house, I concluded immediately that you must be the person I was in quest of, and since my conjecture proves true, I am determined to give you all the marks in my power how grateful a sense I have for any services done to our family, and especially to my dearly beloved cousin Donna Mercia de Mosquera."

"I conjure you therefore, sir, in her name to come and take up your lodging at my house, where you will be infinitely more at your ease than you can possibly be here."

In

In vain were all my objections, this obliging lady prevailed, and having a coach waiting for her at the gate of the inn, she took care in person to see my portmanteau put therein, giving for reason of her so doing, the number of thieves that swarmed at Valladolid.

I went into the coach with her, and her attendant squire. Thus, through complaisance I let myself be carried away from the inn, with the no small regret of my landlord, who saw himself deprived of the large bills he fancied I should run up at his house.

Our coach having been driven for a moderate space of time stopt. We alit at a spacious house of good appearance, and were shewed up to an elegant apartment, illuminated with twenty or thirty wax candles. Several servants were in waiting, of whom the lady asked, if Don Raphael was come? they answered, he was not; then turning to me, her ladyship was pleased to say.

“Courteous Gil Blas, I expect my brother  
“return home this evening from a castle  
“we have at two leagues distance from the  
“city. How agreeably surprized he will be  
“to find here the young gentleman to whom  
“our family is so much obliged!” She had scarce said the word, when, by a bustle from below stairs, we were informed of the coming of Don Raphael, who soon made his appearance above stairs: he had the florid air of youth, and was very well made.

The

The lady, not able to contain herself, cries out in a rapture; "My dear brother, your return gives me the highest pleasure, that you may assist me to give the gallant Gil Blas de Santillane a proper reception. We can never sufficiently acknowledge our obligations to him, on account of his important service to Donna Mercia."

She then pulled a letter out of her pocket, and delivered it to her brother, which he opened and read aloud: "My dear Camilla, the worthy Gil Blas de Santillane, who has saved my life, and what is still dearer, my honour, has just set out from hence for the court. He will, in all probability, pass through Valladolid. I beseech you, by all the ties of blood and friendship, to seek him out, to regale and detain him a few days with you. I flatter myself that you will grant me the satisfaction, and that my deliverer will receive from you and my cousin Don Raphael all sort of polite treatment, which favour shall for ever be acknowledged in a distinguished manner, by your affectionate kinswoman."

Dated at Burgos. "Donna Mercia."

"What," said Raphael, having finished the letter, "it is then to this young gentleman our dear cousin is indebted for the safety of her life and honour:" upon which he repeatedly embraced me. We then sat down to supper, during which all manner of attention was paid to me. I scarce uttered a sentence, but

but I was complimented for the strong reason or the wit of it. Nay, Camilla from time to time glanced marks of affection to me, at which I thought she endeavoured to conceal from her brother. What more flattering situation could there be for a young man's vanity, caressed by the brother, beloved by the sister &c.

They had no great difficulty to persuade me to tarry a few days with them, and which the reader consented to, that I might have an opportunity of putting to the test my new enamour'd lady's affection for me. A party of pleasure to their country castle for the next day was proposed, to which I cheerfully consented. Having amused ourselves sufficiently after supper, we retired to bed.

When I awoke the next morning, I perceived the day was pretty far advanced. I was surprized at my valet's not appearing, after the orders I had given him to call me up early; but I concluded within myself, that honest Ambrose was gone to some church to invoke the protection of heaven for us. However, at his not coming some time after, and at my discovering that my portmanteau was taken out of the chamber, I began to alter my good opinion of him.

I opened my chamber door in some emotion, and cried out several times "Ah hypocrite, hypocrite, whither art thou fled?" on hearing me speak so loud, an old man came and asked me what I wanted. The com-



pany you were with went off from my house long before day-break. "Your house, friend!" replied I in amazement; "Am I not in the house of Don Raphael?"

"Alas, I know no such gentleman as you mention," rejoined the old man. "This is a house of furnished lodgings, and I am the landlord of it. About an hour before I saw you last night, sir, the lady you supposed with had been to hire this apartment for a young grandee, who, as she said, travelled incognito. Nay, she paid me beforehand that you might not be disappointed."

I immediately saw how matters stood, and that it was all the consequence of my indiscretion, to let the landlord of the inn at Burgos into the secret of my affairs. He it was recommended Ambrose to me, and had, no doubt, concerted the whole affair with his worthy co-operators, of whom I strongly suspected the old man I was speaking to to be one; who on hearing my story, pretended the highest affliction that any such scene of villainy should have been acted in his house.

Having sufficiently bewailed myself, I began to reflect that instead of yielding to adversity, I ought to make head against it. I summoned all the spirits I could, and said, while I was dressing myself, "it is, however, some consolation in my present misfortune, that the vile pilferers have left my cloaths, in the pockets whereof were some ducats. Nay, they proved so kind as not to carry off my boots,

I

" which

which I sold to my landlord for a third part of what they had cost me. In fine, blessed be the will of heaven, I departed from the house of my furnished lodgings entirely released from the necessity of having a porter to carry my things. Ambrose had also taken away my mules from the inn the night before.

As I walked in a melancholly mood through the streets of Valladolid, not knowing what resolution to pursue, I was abruptly accosted by a young man. "Why how now, Gil Blas, do not you know your old acquaintance? have two years made so great an alteration in the son of the barber Nunnez? what, do not you remember Fabricio your townsman and school-fellow?"

I soon recollected him, we rushed into each other's arms, and embraced with transport. "Alas, my friend," said he, "I feel the highest joy at seeing you. I am scarce able to express myself on the occasion. I cannot but admire your elegant accoutrement, which denotes your having been in fortune's favour. I would bet a wager now, you are retained in the pleasurable service of some old magnate."

You mistake matters quite, I replied to him: we went into a publick house, and there I related to him all my adventures since my departure from Ovieda; at which he expressed great amazement, and strove to comfort me with a great deal of common place argument, as that heaven tries its favourites in the school of

adversity, that for his part, he was beyond the reach of misfortune; to confirm which, he told me some adventures that had happened to himself, and that he was at present hired with a director of a publick hospital, a pious good man, who by serving the poor had made his own fortune at the same time.

Fabricio having ended his narrative of the many vicissitudes he had gone through, I gave him joy at his being satisfied with his present station, but observed to him at the same time, that I thought he might act a much more reputable part in life.

Fabricio soon convinced Gil Blas of his erroneous notions in regard to the station of lacqueys, when they happen to fall well; and that so effectually, as to make him renounce all thoughts of going to Salamanca to commence pedagogue there, and take on in the party-coloured corps, there being an excellent place then vacant at Valladolid. Wherefore, that no time should be lost, in order to insure to Gil Blas that haven of happiness, Fabricio conducted him directly to the house of the old gouty licentiate Sedillo.

Fabricio knocked at the door, which was soon opened. Upon our saying we wanted to speak with the licentiate Sedillo, (who was a canon and had a good church benefice) a sedate comely woman, dame Jacinta his governante, made her appearance. Scandalous history had whispered through the town that she and her eccle-

stiaſtic maſter had not been always occupied at ſaying their prayers together.

We made her a profound ſalutation, which ſhe courteouſly returned with a moſt countenance and eyes declined. We told her the buſineſs we were come about. She bid us follow her. We ſaw the licentiate in all the apparatus of the gout. I was received: and my friend Fabricio in going away, whiſpered me that we ſhould ſoon ſee each other.

As ſoon as my companion was gone, my new maſter deſired to know my name, and why I had quitted my native country. This naturally put me on the hiſtory of my adventures, which highly entertained him, as well as his governante. The tranſactions of Don Raphael and Camilla threw them both into ſuch a violent fit of laughter, that the poor canon (a vehement cough came on) had like to have been carried off.

The alarm of the governante was inexpressible, not ſo much, perhaps, for the apprehenſion of her maſter's death, as on the account of his not having made a will. However, with ſome aſſiſtance, he ſoon recovered, and diſſipated her fears. As I was going to continue my narrative, Jacinta oppoſed, dreading a relapſe, and conducted me from my maſter's apartment to a wardrobe, where, among ſeveral ſuits of cloaths, was hung up that of my predeceſſor. She deſired me to take it down, and put up my own in the place of it,  
which

GIL BLAS de SANTILLANE. 51

which I was not sorry to do, that by being thus preserved it might be of future service to me.

We afterwards went to get dinner ready. I was not disqualified from cutting a tolerable figure in a kitchen, since the experience I had under Leonarda; who, however, was far from being so exquisite a cook as dame Jacinta. Our master and we lived excellently well, all to one article that regarded myself; to wit, I was obliged to sit up with him every night, supply him with his urinal, and shift him when he was seized with violent sweats.

After the second night he declared himself very well pleased with my service, and recommended me above all things to behave respectfully to Jacinta, for whom he protested he had a greater veneration than for all his relations, because the kind creature had lived with him from the age of fifteen, taking care of all his wants.

By an artful reply, giving into all his weaknesses, and praising Jacinta up to the sky, as well as thanking heaven for my good lot to be his servant, I won his good graces; and what fixed me more and more in his esteem, was my studied chearfulness to sit up with, and watch him every night, (however sore I felt myself) reposing only but a few hours in the day time.

When I had lived with Sedillo about three months, he fell dangerously sick. He was seized with a fever, the violence of which

brought on his gout; and being somewhat startled thereat, for the first time of his very long life, he thought of a physician, and expressed his desire of sending for doctor Sangrado, the Hippocrates of Valladolid.

Jacinta would fain have him make his will before the doctor's interfering, which Sedillo, not thinking himself dangerously ill, would not listen to. I was therefore dispatched for this famous doctor, and brought him with me. He was a tall, thin, pale man, who for fifty years had kept the scissors of destiny in full play. This learned physician had a solemn exterior. He weighed his arguments, and gave an emphasis to his expressions. In all his reasoning there appeared a geometric precision, and his notions were very regular.

Having observed my master fully, he said with a doctoral air: "Our indication here is to supply the defect of perspiration which is stopt. I know very well, that in this case, there are practitioners who would prescribe saline, urinous and volatile remedies, which participate of sulphureous and mercurial qualities. But all purgatives and sudorifics ought to be looked upon as very pernicious to the human frame. Nay, all chymical preparations cause havock wherever administered. For my part, I make use of milder and surer agents."

He then asked my master, "what food he chiefly lived on." To which question he replied, as well as he could, "on rich soups  
" and



“ and the best of meat.” “ Ah,” quoth the doctor, shaking his head scientifically, “ I am not at all astonished that you are sick. Why, man of God, all rich living is at best but a delicious poison. Exquisite dishes are the snares deceitful pleasure lays before us, for our more certain and speedy ruin. For your part, sir, if you have a mind to live, you must absolutely renounce all high seasoned living. The most insipid are the most friendly to health ; for the blood being insipid, that is, having no taste, agrees best with food that is so.”

“ Pray now tell me good sir, if you drink any wine.” “ Yes, doctor, but mixed with water.” “ Mixed as much as you please !” replied Sangrado ; “ what an irregular life you have led ! and what an abominable regimen you have followed ! why, really you ought to have been dead long ago. Pray, how old are you ?” The enfeebled and terrified Sedillo replied, “ I am now entering on my nine and sixtieth year.” “ O ho,” says Sangrado, “ it is a just remark, anticipated old age is the consequence of youth spent in intemperance.”

“ If you had drunk nothing but pure water all your life time, and had been satisfied with the plainest food, such as coddled apples, &c. you would not now be tormented with the gout ; all your limbs would be able to execute their respective functions. However, I do not despair of re-

“ storing you to health, if you promise to scrupulously follow my prescriptions.” Sedillo promised punctual obedience in every article.

Sangrado then sent me for a surgeon, who came along with me. By the doctor’s direction, he drew a large quantity of blood from my master, in order, as he said, to supply the defect of transpiration. He then spoke to the surgeon, “ Friend, Martin Onez,” (that was his name) “ you are to return in three hours time, and do as much ; which course you are also to recommence to-morrow morning. It is a gross error to imagine that it is blood contributes to the preserving of life. A sick person cannot be bled too much : for, in that situation, not being obliged to make any considerable movement or exercise, all he has to do is not to die, and therefore needs no more blood to continue his existence, than a man asleep. For life in both consists only in the pulse and respiration.”

Besides, these copious and frequent bleedings, the doctor ordered that Sedillo should be constantly plied with warm water, for he declared, that warm water drunk in abundance was the true specific against all sorts of diseases. He then took his leave, telling Jacinta and me, as he went out of the house, that he would answer for the recovery of our master, in case his prescription should be duly followed.

Jacinta,

Jacinta, who had a quite different opinion of the success of the doctor's method, declared it should be faithfully observed. To begin, we put some water on the fire to warm it, and Sangrado having recommended to us, above all things, not to be sparing thereof, we prevailed on our master to drink two or three quarts running, which we repeated about an hour after; and afterwards returned from time to time to the charge. He deluged his stomach with warm water. The surgeon seconding our operation with his of drawing blood frequently, in two days we reduced the aged Sedillo to the last extremity.

My poor master in the agony, as I pressed him to swallow a large glass of the specific, said to me in a very weak voice, "Hold your hand, good Gil Blas, do not give me any more. I find I must die in spite of the greatest virtues of warm water; and although I have scarce a drop of blood left, I do not find myself in the least bettered by it, which is a plain proof that the greatest physician in the world cannot protract our days, when the allotted term of life is come. Therefore fly for a notary, I am determined to make a will."

Although, in my heart not at all displeased to hear this, I affected to be sad, in order to conceal the better the ardent desire I had to execute this commission. "Courage," quoth I, "good master, you are not as yet so far gone but you may recover."

“ No, no, child,” answered he, “ it is all  
“ over. I feel the gout ascends, and death  
“ approaches ; therefore, make haste and go  
“ whither I bid you.” In fact, I observed that  
he was going very fast, and matters wore  
so threatening an aspect that I hurried for the  
notary, leaving Jacinta to take care of her  
master. She was under as great apprehen-  
sions as I, lest he should die without making a  
will.

I went into the house of the first notary I  
could find, and being so lucky as to meet him  
at home, said, “ Sir, my master the licen-  
“ tiate Sedillo is at death’s door, he wants to  
make his will, wherefore haste along with  
me : there is no time to be lost.” The no-  
tary was a little old man of a droll disposition,  
who loved raillery in his heart. He enquired  
who was my master’s physician, I replied doc-  
tor Sangrado.

At the very mention of the name he put  
on his hat and cloak in a violent hurry, and  
said, “ In the name of God, let us go with  
“ wings of expedition, for Sangrado is a  
“ doctor of so great dispatch, as frequently  
“ not to give his patients time to call a no-  
“ tary ; through him I have lost the making  
“ of many a will.”

We set out together full speed, yet fast as  
we went, I observed to him, that a dying  
testator’s memory but too often fails him.  
“ Wherefore, if my master should forget,  
“ pray put him in mind of my zeal to serve  
“ him.”

“ him,” “ I will, my lad,” replied the notary, “ you may rely upon me. Nay, more, “ I will exhort him to leave you something “ considerable, if I find him in the least sensible of any service you have rendered to “ him.”

The licentiate had not as yet lost his reason when we came, and dame Jacinta sat near him, her face drowned in tears, which she had always ready at command. She had been playing her part, in order to prepare the good man to leave her a considerable legacy.

We left the notary with our master, and retired to the anti-chamber, where we met the surgeon dispatched by Sangrado to make another, the conclusive bleeding. We stopt him, and Jacinta said, “ You cannot go now “ into our master’s chamber, because a notary is with him writing down his last will. “ As soon as that shall be made you may “ bleed him.”

Jacinta and I were under very great uneasiness, lest Sedillo should expire while he was making his will. But to our good fortune, he lived to finish the deed he was about. As the notary came out of the licentiate’s chamber, he struck me on the shoulder, saying, with a smile, “ Gil Blas is not forgot.”

I was transported with joy at the welcome sound, and was so grateful for being thus remembered by my master, that I declared I would pray heartily for him after his decease, which happened in a short time after: for

the surgeon having performed another operation on the already exhausted old man, to diminish the quantity of his blood, he expired soon after.

The doctor happening to come as Sedillo was at the last gasp, looked somewhat foolish, though so accustomed to dispatch people at short warning. He was, however, so far from imputing Sedillo's death to his copiously drinking warm water, or the frequency of his being let blood, that, on the contrary, he insisted it was owing to his not having got enough of either, which he said in a phlegmatic tone of voice, and walked off. The surgeon seeing there was no farther business for him, marched after the doctor.

Jacinta and I set a roaring most lamentably over our deceased master, in so loud a manner, that we were heard by the neighbours, who came to us in crowds, not from a sense of compassion, but meer curiosity. The relations of the deceased, the moment they had got wind of his death, ran to the house and had every thing put under seal.

They found Jacinta in such violent affliction, that they conceived some hopes Sedillo had made no will. But they were soon undeceived, by the exhibition of one executed in all the requisite formalities. On reading the licentiate's will, they discovered he had left all his effects to Jacinta, they made his funeral oration in not over respectful terms,



terms, and let loose their indignation against Jacinta, who comforted herself for the abuse with what Sedillo had left her.

They made me the object of some of their unchristian wishes, finding I was mentioned in the will, and which, to be sure I deserved. For the good licentiate, just on the point of rendering up his soul to God, in order to make me remember him during the rest of my life, thus explained himself in his will relative to me. "Item. To Gil Blas, who  
 " has already had some education, in order  
 " to compleat it, I bequeath all the books  
 " and manuscripts of my library, without any  
 " reserve whatsoever."

For my part I did not know what his library could consist of, for I had never seen more than a few old papers, with about five or six old volumes, ranged on two deal boards in Sedillo's closet, and these were the sum total of my legacy.

As for the books, they could be of no great service to me, one being entitled, *The perfect Cook*; another was, a *Treatise upon Indigestion*, with the best method of curing it. the others were the four parts of the *Breviary*, half eaten with worms. As for the manuscripts, the most curious of them were the several pieces of the process at law Sedillo formerly had relative to his prebend. Having considered my legacy with more attention than it deserved, I yielded it up to the relations of the defunct.

I returned to them also the dress I wore, resuming my own, and contented myself with my wages, in return for all the service I had rendered to Sedillo; and then bethought me of getting into some other service. Chancing to meet in the street doctor Sangrado, whom I had not seen since the day of my master's decease, I took the liberty of saluting him.

He soon recollected me although I had changed dress, and appeared not displeased at seeing me. " Luckily met, my lad, I was just thinking of you, I want a good sprightly servant that knows how to read and write, which, if you can."—My immediate reply was, " Sir, I am your man." To which the doctor said, " Agreed, come to my house. There you will find every thing to your heart's desire. I will treat you not as a common servant. I will give you no wages, but you shall want nothing."

" You shall always make a decent appearance, for my design is to teach you the great art of curing diseases. In a word, you shall be rather my pupil than servant." I cheerfully accepted the doctor's proposal, in hopes that one day, under the tuition of so learned a practitioner, I might become an able physician; no unprofitable business.

Doctor Sangrado took me to his house immediately, that without loss of time he might install me in the office he designed I should fill, which was to write down the names and dwelling

dwelling places of the sick that should send for him, while he was abroad paying his visits. He had for this purpose a kind of register-book, in which an old servant maid, the doctor's only domestic, took the different addresses of those who desired the attendance of Sangrado; but it was in such a wretched scrawl and the names and places were so badly spelled, that, very often, it was with great difficulty they could be made out.

This book was given into my care. It might justly be called the registry of the dead, for few, very few, recovered whose names were entered therein. I booked them for the other world, as travellers are for publick carriages, having given earnest. Sangrado being the most eminent physician at Valladolid, my pen was constantly kept a going. He had acquired his great reputation with the people by a pompous jargon, which he uttered with a very imposing air; and by some accidental cures, of which his doctorship was totally innocent, although he modestly ascribed all the merit to himself.

Having great practice, he was consequently rich, but he did not keep a good table. We lived very frugally, eating for the most part, but pease, beans, coddled apples, or cheese. He declared that such aliments agreed best with the stomach, being the most proper for trituration, that is, to be wrought upon. Notwithstanding that, he proved them to be of such easy digestion, he would not suffer us  
to

to indulge too much thereon. But as to the drinking of water, he put us under no restraint, and abandoned us quite to our own discretion; nay, often encouraged us. "Drink, my children, never spare it, for health consists in the suppleness and humectation of the parts. Therefore, swallow copious draughts of water. Water is the universal menstruum, it dissolves all salts. Is the course of the blood slackened; water gives it a whip; is it too rapid, water slackens its impetuosity."

Sangrado himself had so much faith in that element, that he seldom drank any thing but water, though he was then far advanced in years. According to his definition, old age was a natural phthisis, which dries us up and tacitly consumes us. Agreeable to this definition, he deplored the ignorance of those who call wine the milk of old men.

In contradiction to the opinion he maintained, that said pernicious liquor wastes and destroys, affirming, with his usual affected strain of eloquence, that wine, equally fatal to old men, as well as to those of younger years, ought to be looked upon "as a friend that betrays, and a pleasure that deceives."

Notwithstanding all these fine reasons, I was seized with a violent looseness, and had great pains in my stomach, which I was rash enough to attribute to the universal menstruum and the bad aliments I was confined to. I complained of my sufferings to Sangrado, in hopes

hopes that he would soften matters in my behalf, and allow me a little wine at my meals. But there was no getting the better of his aversion to that liquor.

His answer to my complaint was, “ Hark  
 “ you, Gil Blas, if you are disgusted with  
 “ pure water, there are several resources to  
 “ support the stomach against its insipidity ;  
 “ such as the infusing some plants therein,  
 “ which give it a delicious flavour ; for ex-  
 “ ample, sage, speedwell, and to make it  
 “ still more delicious, you may add rosemary,  
 “ myrrh, thyme, &c.”

In vain did he recommend to me these correctives of meer water drinking. So far from putting them in practice, I drank very little of his favourite element, which he perceiving, said, “ Why, how now Gil Blas, I am not  
 “ at all surprized at your not being in health.  
 “ Your indisposition proceeds entirely from  
 “ your not drinking water enough. For wa-  
 “ ter, when drunk but in small quantities,  
 “ serves only to develop and give a corroding  
 “ activity to the constituent particles of the  
 “ bilious humour, which ought to be diluted  
 “ and weakened by the ingurgitation of a wa-  
 “ try abundance.”

“ I hope you know better things, than to  
 “ apprehend that drinking water copiously  
 “ can either debilitate or infrigidate your sto-  
 “ mach. Harbour not any such idle notion,  
 “ give to the winds all panick fears upon the  
 “ article of swallowing water abundantly. I

“ warrant

“ warrant the event will be satisfactory, and  
“ if you do not think my word sufficient,  
“ Celsus shall also be a voucher in behalf of  
“ the mother element. This latin oracle had  
“ made an admirable encomium on water;  
“ where he expressly says, that those who  
“ plead the weakness of their stomach as an  
“ excuse for drinking wine, do a manifest in-  
“ jury to that noble organ of digestion, and  
“ all from the vile motive of shamefully in-  
“ dulging their sensuality, so baneful to whom-  
“ soever has a mind to be a long sojourner on  
“ this terraqueous globe.”

As it would have been indecent in me to appear indocil, who was but just entering the threshold of physic, I seemed to give way to his reasons; nay, to say the truth, I began to believe them; upon the authority of Celsus, and continued a water drinker, or rather commenced to drown the bilious humour by drinking water most plentifully: although in consequence I found myself growing worse every day, yet of such implicit faith was I, that Sangrado's reasons, and the authority of Celsus, prevailed against the experience of my own feeling; a happy disposition for my becoming a physician.

Overcome at last by the racking pain I endured, I determined to leave Sangrado; but his promoting me to a new employment changed my determination. For thus he accosted me on a certain day; “ Know, friend  
“ Gil



“ Gil Blas, that I am not one of those hard  
 “ and ungrateful masters who let domestics  
 “ grow old in their service before they think  
 “ of rewarding them. I am thoroughly sa-  
 “ tisfied with your conduct: nay, I have  
 “ conceived an affection for you. Therefore,  
 “ without waiting for a longer time of your  
 “ probation in my service, I am from this  
 “ moment determined to make your fortune.  
 “ I mean to reveal to you all the secrets of  
 “ the healing art, which I have practised so  
 “ many years.

“ Most of the Esculapian tribe declare phy-  
 “ sick to be the result of several laborious  
 “ sciences, but my intention is to point out  
 “ a short way for you, and to entirely spare  
 “ you the trouble of studying natural philoso-  
 “ phy, pharmacy, botany, and astronomy.  
 “ There is nothing more necessary to cure  
 “ all diseases, than to order frequent bleed-  
 “ ings, and that the sick drink warm water  
 “ copiously. That is the grand secret by  
 “ which I have made a fortune. You know  
 “ as much of the matter now as I do; there-  
 “ fore you can ease me of some of the fa-  
 “ tiques of practice.”

“ In the morning you are still to attend the  
 “ registry-book, but in the afternoon you are  
 “ to visit some of my patients. While I at-  
 “ tend the nobility and clergy, your business  
 “ will be to take care of the lower class of  
 “ people; and after that you shall have prac-  
 “ tised

“tised for some time, I will get you aggregated to our corps. You have the advantage of being learned before you commence doctor, whereas many have been made doctors, that to the end of their lives never incumbered their heads with any learning.”

I thanked doctor Sangrado's generosity for having made me so speedily capable of acting as his substitute, and in grateful return for all his kindnesses to me, protested, that to the end of my life I would implicitly follow his opinion, though it should prove directly opposite to that of Hippocrates. This declaration however was not sincere, for I entirely disagreed with him in regard to water drinking, and resolved in myself to cheer my stomach every day with the juice of the grape as I should go to visit the sick.

I hung up my coat a second time to put on a medicinal garb of my master's. As soon as dressed in character, I set out about practising physick, no matter at whose expence. My first patient was an Alguasil, sick of a pleurisy. I ordered him to be let blood unmercifully, and to be drenched with warm water.

From him I went to a pastry-cook, whom I found roaring in a violent fit of the gout. I prescribed for him the same recipe, frequent bleedings, and plenty of warm water. I received twelve reals for my prescription, which inspired me with so great a liking for the profession,

session, that I desired no better sport than a multitude of patients.

Going out of the pastry-cook's house, I met Fabricio in the street, whom I had not seen since the decease of the licentiate Sedillo; he at first stared at me for some moments in a kind of amazement, then broke out into an immoderate laughter, of which my original trim was a sufficient cause. I had on me a long black gown that trailed on the ground, with a doublet, &c. quite too large for me.

I let the gentleman indulge himself and have his laugh out; nay, was partly tempted to join with him, but for the restraint of observing a necessary decorum in the street, and to act the better the gravity of a doctor, who is not a risible animal. Fabricio's laugh, excited at first by the originality of my garb, was redoubled in him by the solemn immobility of my muscles, and the serious air I affected. But as soon as his laughing fit was over, he cried out to me, "In the name of all the saints, who has made this scar-mouch of you? was ever mortal man in such a ridiculous disguise.!"

"Not so fast," replied I, "good Fabricio; learn to respect in me a new Hippocrates. Know, friend, that I am the practising substitute of doctor Sangrado, the most celebrated physician in Valladolid. I have lived with him three weeks, and he has taught me the very marrow of physick. Wherefore, as it is impossible for him to answer  
" all

“all the sick who call for him, I attend part  
“of them, in order to ease him of too much  
“trouble. He takes care of the great folks,  
“those of the lower class fall to me.  
“Admirably well!” said Fabricio, “he  
“abandons to you the blood of the cannailles,  
“while he enjoys that of the great and weak-  
“thy. Nothing could be laid out better. I  
“congratulate you, Gil Blas on your share.  
“It is much safer dealing with the populace,  
“than with those in high life. A suburb  
“doctor plays the surest game, the blunders  
“he commits are less exposed to observation,  
“and his frequent assassinations are scarcely  
“ever mentioned. My dear friend, I think  
“your situation is to be envied, and to talk  
“in the style of Alexander, Were I not  
“Fabricio, I would fain be Gil Blas.

In order to convince my townsman that he was not in the wrong to think my condition worthy of being envied, I shewed him the twelve reals I had received from the Alguasil, and the pastry-cook. We then went into a tavern to drink a bottle together. The wine we got was good, and the longing desire I had to drink some gave it an additional zest.

I quaffed it with luxury, and in despite of all the Latin oracle Celsus may have advanced to the contrary, I found my stomach did not resent any injury I did it by pouring down bumpers of wine. Fabricio and I made a fitting of it, and according to the custom of servants, laughed heartily at the expence of

our masters. But on perceiving it was near dark, we took leave of each other, after a mutual promise that we should meet in the same house the next afternoon.

I had scarce got home when doctor Sangrado entered. I gave him a circumstantial account of the sick I had seen, and eight reals of the twelve I had received for fees. "Why," "Gil Blas," remarked he, having counted them, "eight reals are but poor payment for two visits; but no money is to be refused." He put six in his pocket and gave me two, saying, "Here, Gil Blas, begin with these to make a stock. I propose letting you have a fourth of what money you shall bring me. You will thereby soon become rich, my lad; for with the blessing of God, we shall have a great number of sick this year."

I found no reason to be dissatisfied with my dividend, for having so settled matters with myself as to always retain a quarter of what I should receive in my visits, and being likewise to receive a quarter of what I should give to Sangrado. If there be any reliance on arithmetical calculation, the said two shares were equal to a half. Such large gains inspired me with new ardour for the profession.

Immediately after dinner next day I put on my substitute's apparel, and sallied to visit my patients. I saw several of them whose names I had taken down, and treated them all alike, though no two of them had the same distem-

per. Thus far, things went swimmingly on, and, thanks be to Providence, no body complained of, or demurred against what I ordered. But let a physician's practice be ever so excellent, it will not always escape censure.

I visited a grocer's son, sick of a dropfy, where I met a little physician of a brown complexion, they called him doctor Cuchillo. He had been sent to see the young man by a relation of the family. I made profound salutations to all present, and particularly to the personage whom I thought had been called in to give his opinion of the sick youth.

He returned my salute in a very solemn manner, and having looked stedfastly on me for some time, said, "I hope, doctor, you will excuse my curiosity to know who you are? I thought I knew all my brother physicians in Valladolid, yet your face, sir, is quite unknown to me. I suppose then you are but lately come to establish here."

I answered him, that I was a young practitioner, and that as yet I acted under the auspicious guidance of doctor Sangrado. To which he instantly rejoined, "Sir, I pay you my compliments, for having adopted the practice of so great a man. I make no doubt, that although but a young man, you are already a very able practitioner."

Cuchillo expressed himself in so seemingly ingenuous a manner, that I could not be certain whether he had spoken seriously or ironically. I was ruminating upon what answer I should



I should make him, when the grocer seizing on the moment of our being silent, said,

“Gentlemen, I make no manner of doubt but that you are both perfectly skilled in the curing art, therefore pray you to examine my son, and prescribe what will be most effectual for his cure.”

Upon this declaration the little doctor set about observing the sick youth, and having enumerated to me the several symptoms that discovered the nature of the disease, he asked me what I thought would be the best method of treating it.

I answered Cuchillo, that, “in my opinion, the patient should lose some blood every day, and drink warm water in abundance.” To this my declaration, the little pert Cuchillo replied with a smile of malice, “And so, sir, you think those remedies will save the patient’s life?” “Without doubt,” added I in a resolute tone of voice. They must produce their effect, being sovereign specifics against all sorts of disorders, and should you be in the least dissident of the truth of my assertion, appeal to doctor Sangrado.”

“If things be so,” rejoined Cuchillo, in an affected tone of concession, “Celsus has been very wrong in saying that for the more speedy cure of an hydropic person, it is proper he should be made to suffer hunger and thirst.”—I thus huffed his authority,—“Celsus, sir, is not my oracle in physic; he  
“ was

“ was liable to errors as well as other men.  
“ I have found myself the better for acting in  
“ contradiction to his doctrine.

I gather, sir, from your speech, quoth Cuchillo, that you are imbued with the certain and satisfactory doctrine of Sangrado, which he takes so much pains to insinuate to all young practitioners. According to him, bleeding and drinking warm water are the universal remedies. It is not at all surprizing that such numbers perish in his hands.

“ No invectives, sir, if you please,” interrupted I with some tartness, “ it does not  
“ become one of the profession to throw out  
“ such idle reproaches. Take my word for  
“ it, good master Cuchillo, that without the  
“ assistance of bleeding and warm water,  
“ there are several other ways of sending patients to their requiem, and, perhaps, you  
“ may have dispatched as many passengers to  
“ Charon’s bark as another. If you have any  
“ pique to doctor Sangrado, write against his  
“ practice, he will answer you, take my word  
“ for it, and then we shall know against whom  
“ the general laugh will be turned.”

Cuchillo broke in upon me with some emotion, “ By saint James and Dennis, you take  
“ great liberties, young man, with doctor  
“ Cuchillo, who cannot say he has the honour of knowing you. But be assured,  
“ my forward sir, that I can support my opinion as well as any medical he in Valladolid, and that I am not in the least afraid

“ of

“ of your so much vaunted Sangrado, who  
 “ (notwithstanding his vanity and presump-  
 “ tion) is an original.”

The ridiculous figure of the diminutive Cuchillo made me laugh at his anger. I said some harsh things to him ; but he took immediate care to balance the account in full as harsh terms. From a scurrilous altercation of words we proceeded to blows, and tore each other's hair, before the grocer and a relation of his could separate us ; which done, they paid me for my visit, and retained my antagonist as the abler physician.

This adventure scarce over, I was like to fall into another. I went to visit a lusty chorister, sick of a fever, who, the moment he heard me mention hot water, declared so great an aversion to this specific, that he fell a swearing, called me several opprobrious names, and threatened to throw me out of the window.

At such rude treatment I ran out of the house faster than I had come into it. I resolved to visit no more patients that day, and repaired to the tavern, where I had promised to meet Fabricio. I found him there before me. Being in a drinking mood, we indulged ourselves, and each returned home a little tipsy.

Sangrado did not perceive I had been so-  
 lacing myself with wine, his whole attention  
 being occupied by the spirited manner in which  
 I related to him the dispute between Cuchillo

and me. He imputed the vehemence of my gestures, and precipitancy of my words, to the not as yet subsided emotions caused by our medicinal skirmish. Moreover, he was interested as to his character in the narrative I made to him, and stung to the quick at Cuchillo's reflections, thus said to me:

"Gil Blas, thou wert in the right to defend  
"the honour of our practice against this  
"pigmy doctor, this abortion of the faculty—  
"So then, according to him, forsooth, water  
"drinking is not to be allowed to hydropic  
"patients. The ignorant coxcomb! but I  
"maintain and insist that it is to be allowed.  
"For, pray why should not water cure all sorts  
"of dropsies as well as it cures the rheumatism  
"and green sickness. It is moreover excel-  
"lent in those fevers where we burn and  
"freeze at the same time; and its power ap-  
"pears no where so wonderful as in those  
"diseases that are ascribed to ferous, cold,  
"pituitous and phlegmatic humours."

"This doctrine, indeed, may appear strange  
"to green horn doctors, like Cuchillo, but it  
"is defensible by the most irrefragible maxims  
"of our art; and if my opponents were ca-  
"pable of reasoning like philosophers, instead  
"of their vain efforts to decry my practice,  
"they would become zealous proselites in its  
"behalf."

The flurry Sangrado was thrown into by Cuchillo's aspersions, hindered his perceiving my having tumbled; and to keep his passion alive,

alive, I invented some aggravating circumstances. However, in the midst of all this warmth at what I had related to him, he perceived that I drank that night more water than usual, which, in truth, was to quench a violent thirst caused by the wine I had drunk.

Any other person but Sangrado would soon have suspected the reason of my drinking water so plentifully, but the good man imagined that it proceeded solely from a growing fondness I had conceived for that element; whereupon he said with a smile, "Well, heaven be praised, Gil Blas, I see you have overcome your aversion to water, you quaff it down like nectar. Nor am I astonished thereat. I knew you would accustom yourself to it by degrees."

"Every thing must have its time," I replied, "believe me, sir, I would this very moment prefer a quart of water to a hog-head of wine." Sangrado, enraptured with my answer, ran out in the praise of that excellent element, during which, it was with much difficulty I could refrain from laughing. I kept my countenance in as much subjection as I could; seemed to enter into all the views of the doctor, inveighed against the pernicious use of wine, and to confirm my opinion, drank off a large goblet of water.

Upon which Sangrado continued an exhortation to me, for about an hour long, to never drink any thing but water. I replied, that in order to bring myself to it, I was from that

time forward resolved to drink a large quantity every night; and to be the better able to keep my promise, as I went to bed, I resolved within myself to go every afternoon to the tavern.

The rebuff I had met at the grocer's did not hinder my prescription of bleeding and warm water-drinking the next day. The small pox and malignant fevers were become very rife in the city and suburbs. All the physicians in Valladolid had practice enough, but we in a more eminent degree. Scarce a day passed over our heads that Sangrado and I did not each of us visit eight or ten patients. From which it is easy to conclude what an effusion of blood there must have been, and what quantities of warm water drunk.

But tho' I could not account for it, we were so out of luck that they all died, which certainly must have proceeded either from the badness of our practice, or from the diseases being incurable. We rarely paid a third visit to any of them. Nay, commonly at the second, we either found the patient in the agony, or were informed of his being just interred.

For my part, being but a novice in practice, and not sufficiently case-hardened to the destruction of my species, I was grievously affected by the fatal catastrophes I had a daily hand in. Instigated by remorse of conscience, I represented to doctor Sangrado, "that though I scrupulously adhered to his  
"method, yet all my sick expired, as if done  
"purposely by them, in order to discredit his  
"practice.



“ practice. I had the displeasure this morning, as I went to visit two of my patients, to see them carried out to be buried.”

To which Sangrado calmly replied, “ Be not dejected, my son, the same has happened to me. I have not always the satisfaction of curing those who apply to me. Nay, so often am I disappointed, that if I were not thoroughly sure of the principles I act upon, I should, from experience, incline to think my remedies quite contrary to most of the diseases I treat.”

“ Then, sir,” remonstrated I, “ if you will be advised by me, let us vary our practice. By way of curiosity, let us prescribe for our patients some chymical preparations; the worst that can happen is, that they produce the same effect our bleeding and warm water have done.”

“ I should readily incline, Gil Blas,” said Sangrado, “ to make such an experiment, but that I dread the consequence; for you must know that I have published a book, wherein I boast that I had discovered the universal remedy in frequent bleeding and warm water. You would not sure have me act in contradiction to my book.”

“ You observe right, sir,” rejoined I, “ you must by no means furnish that occasion of triumphing to your enemies; for they, with a malicious kindness, would spread every where, that you have seen your error at last, and find yourself under a necessity of

“ conforming with their practice, which  
“ would certainly ruin your reputation; and  
“ rather than that should happen, let the po-  
“ pulace, ecclesiastics and nobility perish to a  
“ man. Let us therefore, master, continue  
“ our usual course; for after all, our brother  
“ doctors, notwithstanding their aversion to  
“ bleeding and water drinking, do not per-  
“ form more miracles than we do, and I  
“ believe their drugs are to the full as ineffec-  
“ tual as our specifics.”

We jogged on in our old medicinal practice, and so invariably, that in six weeks time we caused as many widows and orphans in Valladolid as the siege of Troy had done. Every day either a father came to reproach us for the loss of his son, or an uncle for that of his nephew. Indeed, I never observed that either sons or nephews came to express their displeasure to us for the loss of their fathers and uncles. We received but few visits from husbands in regard to their deceased wives.

The really afflicted persons did not treat us over politely; for in their excessive grief, their favourite terms were ignorant blockheads, assassinating scoundrels. Of such and similar compliments they were by no means niggard, whereat my blood was stirred from time to time; but the unmoved Sangrado would listen to them with all the phlegm of a philosopher.

Perhaps, by degrees, I should have acquired the same store of indifference for all the abuse of the enraged relations of the deceased, were

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it not for an accident, that for the good of the sick people of Valladolid, made me to renounce that city and physick.

A terrible bully there, and terror of all, was courting a handsome widow, mistress of a tennis-court, by marrying whom, which she had consented to, he was to better his situation. But, alas, she happening to fall sick, I was sent for, and in four days so exasperated what at first was but a trifling disorder, that I dispatched her into the other world.

The bully, Don Rodriguez by name, to be revenged on me for the loss of his fortune, swore he would run his sword through my body the first place he should meet me; to which bloody deed he was encouraged by the other doctors of the town, enemies to Sangrado, saying, that I was but a quack, had no degree, and was punishable for practising.

Having got intelligence of Don Rodriguez's resolution, I renounced for ever the doctor's habit, and put on my old embroidered coat, then bid adieu to Sangrado, who made use of all the arguments he could to detain me, but to no purpose. The wicked Roderiguez being ever present to my frightened imagination, in order not to meet him I made my escape from Valladolid next morning by the break of day. The only regret I had in leaving that city was, my not having seen Fabricio, my faithful Pylades, to bid him adieu.

As I trudged along the road to Madrid, I asked pardon of heaven for all the mischief I had committed whilst Sangrado's substitute. I nevertheless counted over with pleasure in thought, the fees I had received for my several assassinations, like those women who have quitted the trade of prostitution, yet live on the money they had made by it.

I had left, in reals, to the full value of five ducats, that was the sum total I set out with from Valladolid. I computed it sufficient to defray my expences to Madrid, where I relied upon getting into some good service. I had moreover a passionate desire to see that superb city, which had been so often vaunted to me as the abridgment of all the wonders of the world.

As I was ruminating upon all the fine relations I had heard of Madrid, and the pleasures that are enjoyed there, I heard the voice of a man singing, as he came fast after, and soon joined me. He had a leathern sack on his back, and a guitar hanging from his neck; by his side was stuck a very long toledo.

He happened to be a journeyman barber, an intimate of my friend and townsman Fabricio, by whom he was introduced to my acquaintance at Valladolid. We soon hailed each other, being equally surprized at our unexpected meeting on the highway, and equally pleased at our joining company. I told him what had made me quit Valladolid, and he in  
return

return informed me of his reason; to wit, a quarrel with his master, and that besides, he was resolved to visit his parents, whose dwelling place was at Olmedo, a large village on this side of Segovia. I determined to accompany him thither, and to repair from thence to Segovia, where I hoped to find some conveniency to forward me to Madrid.

Having refreshed ourselves on the road, my new companion, from what he had heard of my strange adventures from Fabricio, entreated me to tell him the whole, which, having nothing better to do, and to beguile the road I readily consented to. When I had finished my narrative, I requested that he would indulge me with the relation of his, which he did, and it proved not altogether unentertaining.

By the time he had done we were come to the Ponto de Duero, and remained there that day. We set out with the dawn next morning, and we put up at night in a little village whose name I have forgot, between Moyados and Valpuesta. The following morning by eleven o'clock we reached the Plains of Olmedo.

"This," said my companion, "is the place of my birth, I feel a transport in reviewing it;" so natural it is for man to love his native country. As we advanced on the plain we discovered a number of people near the town; and drawing still nearer, we descri'd objects worthy of our attention.

There were three great tents pitched at a small distance one from the other, and near them were a number of cooks and scullions preparing a feast; some laid napkins on long tables in the tents, others were occupied in filling earthen pitchers with wine.

One set of attendants was employed in making the pots boil, another in turning spits, on which were all sorts of meat. But what attracted my attention more than any other object, was a large theatre newly erected; its decorations were made of carton, painted in different colours, and furcharged with Greek and Latin devices.

Curiosity egged on my companion and me to know what was the intent of the mighty preparations we saw before us. We soon learned that it was a rejoicing on account of a large fortune left to some inhabitants of Olmedo, and some marriage in consequence. We regaled ourselves plentifully first, and afterwards partook of their rural diversions.

I sojourned a few days with my fellow-traveller, and then set out with a merchant of Segovia, who passed through Olmedo in his way back from Valladolid, with four unloaded mules. He treated me with kindness on the road, and detained me two days at his house in Segovia. When he saw me ready to set out with a muleteer for Madrid, he gave me a letter, which he desired I should deliver in person as addressed.

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He did not tell me the contents, I accordingly delivered it to Mattheo Melendez, a cloth merchant at Madrid, who, upon reading it, he informed me was a letter of recommendation to him in my behalf; proceeded very civilly toward me, entertaining me in his house till such time as he should be able to procure me a good place; which he did in a few days, with a gentleman of his acquaintance, who, being a whimsical man did not keep me long in his service, and discharged me through caprice.

By the assistance of my friend Melendez, I soon got into an infinitely more agreeable service than any I had been in with Don Mathias de Silva, a personage of the first quality, and a petit maitre of the court. There Melendez placed me by means of his friend Rodriguez a thorough-paced steward, whom Melendez advised me to pay more court to than to my master, for that would be the way to have my wages exactly paid and receive other favours. The hint was sufficient for me. Rodriguez presented, and Don Mathias received me in quality of valet de chambre.

Don Mathias being invited that morning by three or four young noblemen of his acquaintance, they set out on a party to dine at a famous tavern. I followed my master by his directions, the other gentlemen being followed by their valets. I observed, not without some surprize, as we went along, that each

each of the other servants aped his master and affected all his airs.

I saluted my new brethren, who returned the compliment, and one of them having viewed me for some time, said, "I guess by your gait, sir, that you have not been used to serve young courtiers." "No, sir," replied I, "for I have not been long in Madrid." "That I see plainly," added he, "but courage, my lad, we shall soon form you."

The dinner being ready as we came to the tavern, our masters sat down to table, and we prepared to serve them. I was highly entertained with their discourse, fallies of wit, and agreeable extravagancies. As soon as the desert and a sufficient number of bottles of Spanish wine were served up, we subaltern gentry retired to our dinner prepared for us in a little salon.

We saluted each other by the names of our masters, and drank ourselves tipsy in as lordly a manner as they could. Considering it was my first appearance in high company, they all said I acquitted myself very well. We continued at table till our masters were pleased to break up, which was about midnight.

By frequenting my parti-coloured Peers, I gradually gave into all their impertinences, and commenced a man of intrigue, going out in my master's cloaths. Thus I continued an agreeable libertine life, till such time as Don Mathias was slain in a duel. A few days after  
his

interment, Roderigo discharged me and the other servants.

By a proper transition from a petit maitre, I became soon after valet to a celebrated actress, the best place in the world for a young man to learn all fashionable vices. In consequence I gave headlong into all sorts of debauchery. How was it possible for me to do otherwise, all I heard and all I saw contributed to corrupt my morals.

I yielded myself entirely to the torrent of a most licentious life for three weeks; indulging in every party that offered itself. But to confess the truth, in the midst of this giddy whirl of pleasure, I felt some remorse of conscience. The remains of my former education, and a dash of bitterness threw a damp upon each delight. I soon grew entirely disgusted, and resolved to quit immediately so vicious a station.

By the means of Rodriguez, whom I accidentally met in the street, and gave him a faithful account of my late service and elopement, I was placed with Don Vincent, a rich old nobleman, that had one only daughter Aurora, a most accomplished young lady, and who thinking she remarked something in me above common servants, was pleased to treat me with a greater air of condescension. Having, after her father's death, served her faithfully in an intrigue to win Don Lewis de Pacheco, whom she passionately loved, and was soon married to; she generously rewarded my

my services, and left it to my choice to continue with her, or to go live with an uncle of her husband's, Don Gonzales de Pacheco, who, on hearing them give so great a character of me, earnestly desired to have me in his service.

Upon the report of his being a worthy old gentleman, I told my mistress Aurora, that since so earnestly desired, if with her consent and approbation, I would go live with her husband's uncle, which I looked upon as being still in the family.

I the next morning waited on Don Gonzales, with lady Aurora's compliments, and to inform him of her having consented to my entering into his service. Though mid-day when I went to him, he was yet abed; as I was shewed into his room, I saw a page bring him a bason of soup to take before his rising.

This old gentleman had a large mustacio in papillots. Little shrunk eyes were almost buried in his head, his countenance was very pale and meagre. He was of that class of old batchelors, who have spent their youth in all sorts of libertinism, and do not amend in their more advanced years. He received me very kindly, saying, "If I would serve him  
" with the same zeal I had served lady Au-  
" rora, that my fortune should be made in  
" consequence."

I promised to acquit myself with the same zeal and activity, upon which I was installed in the service of my new master. Good heaven, what a figure of a man it was. As he  
got

got out of bed I thought I saw the resurrection of Lazarus. Imagine, courteous reader, a tall skeleton with a sapless skin drawn over it, through whose transparency students might learn the bones of the human fabrick.

Three or four pair of stockings drawn one upon the other, did not hinder his legs from appearing very spindles. Moreover, this breathing mummy was asthmatic, and coughed at almost every word he spoke. Having drunk his chocolate, he called for pen, ink and paper, wrote a billet deux which he sealed up, and gave it to the page who had served him his soup in bed, to carry quickly to its address.

Then turning to me, he said, “ It is you, friend Gil Blas, that I mean, shall henceforward be charged with my amorous commissions, particularly all those concerning Donna Eufrasia a young lady of quality, by whom I am loved, and love most tenderly.

“ Good heaven,” said I to myself, “ I shall no longer be surprized at young men’s being vain of their intrigues with the fair sex, since such old fusty fellows as this dry exhausted master of mine piques himself thereon.

He told me that she was the abridgment of all female perfection, which I did not oppose; and that she was a Lucretia to him. That I doubted, for, from the experience I had of the

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the ladies, I found that old lovers were their dupes. However, to pay my court to Don Gonzales, I extolled Dona Eufrasia, for having fixed her passion upon so worthy an object: nay, I swore she could not find so amiable a gallant in all the country. I plied him well with the censer-box, and found he had nostrils for it all.

But Euphrasia finding I had too much honesty to enter into all her views to rob my master's heirs, soon prevailed on him, contrary to his own conviction of my integrity, to dismiss me from his service. He excused himself on the occasion as well as he could, which was but in a very awkward unmanly manner, made me a present of fifty ducats, and thinking it incumbent on him to get me a place (having seduced me from lady Aurora) he fixed me with the marchioness de Chaves.

This new mistress of mine was a widow lady of about five and thirty, tall, and well made; she had no children, and enjoyed an income of ten thousand ducats a year. I had never before seen so reserved a lady, or one that spoke so little. Notwithstanding this grave cast, she passed for the most witty woman in Madrid.

The great concourse of persons of quality and literati that assembled at her house every day, contributed more to her acquiring this reputation than any thing she said. I lived very happily with her for about six months,  
and



and was thoroughly pleased with my condition. But my adverse stars still persecuting me, so continued matters, that I fell in love with one of my lady's women, both young and handsome ; her name was Portia.

But, as the devil would have it, my lady's secretary, a proud, jealous, haughty little fellow, was enamoured of the very goddess I adored. From the moment he had discovered my passion, without previously examining whether with Portia's approbation or not, he determined on fighting me, and in consequence, challenged me to meet him next day in a private place he named.

This little fellow scarcely reached up to my shoulders, and being besides of a very weak habit of body, the challenge pleased me, because I prejudged my victory over him as certain, and that I should in consequence be raised in the esteem of Portia. But alas, the event turned out quite contrary to my hopes.

The little secretary, who had practised at a fencing-school for two or three years before, made nothing of my opposition ; nay, soon disarmed me : then presenting the point of his sword at my breast, bid me chuse either to die that moment, or to give my honour that I should never return to the house of the marchioness de Chaves, or think of Portia more. Cruel as the last part of the conqueror's injunction was, prudence and the argument of self-preservation, whispered me to accept of it.

I the more readily complied with the victor's terms, because I could not dare to appear before my fellow-servants, and particularly before my lovely Portia, after so scandalous a defeat. I stole incog to my chamber, from thence carried off my cash, cloaths and things, to make the best of my way to Toledo. As there was no longer abiding for me at Madrid with honour, I determin'd to make the tour of Spain, and take up my quarters for a certain time in each city.

I thus reasoned with myself. The money I am now possessed of, will last me for some time. I will spend it with the greatest œconomy. When totally consumed my final resource is to go to service, and a person of my merit can never fail of getting one to his liking.

I reached Toledo at the end of the third day, took up my lodging at a good inn, where, in virtue of some fine cloaths that I had, and foppish airs, which I exerted, I pass'd myself for a man of consequence. Having seen all objects of curiosity at Toledo, I quitted it one morning before break of day in order to go to Aragon.

On my way thither I met with an amiable young nobleman Don Alphonzo, who took a liking for and opened himself to me. He related all his adventures, and being, after a series of disasters, made happy by marrying the lady he adored, in order that I should participate of his happiness, he made me his steward.

My

My new master Don Alphonzo, was idolatrously fond of Seraphina, who did not yield a whit in passion for him; and old Don Cæsar thought himself on the pinnacle of human happiness, by thus having with him his son and daughter so ardently attached to each other. I made it my business to insinuate myself as far as I could into the esteem of the old gentleman, who took such a liking to me, that the management of almost every thing was left to my disposal.

I paid all demands upon the family, was invested with an absolute power over all the other servants; of which (I can, without vanity, say) I did not abuse. I never took upon me to turn away servants whom I chanced to dislike, nor exacted a ridiculous respect from those who were devoted to me. Nay, if any of them made a direct application to Don Cæsar or his son for any favour; so far was I from thwarting, that I commonly backed their petition.

The daily marks of esteem shewn to me by my worthy masters, inspired me with a disinterested zeal in their behalf. I scorned to profit of any of the little advantages so incidental to those in my station. In fine, I was nonsuch.

But alas, this flattering scene was soon overcast. For a disagreeable duenna, by whom Don Alphonso's lady had been educated from her infancy, fell in love with me, and not being able to work upon me to be correspondent with her

her passion, her love turned to hatred, she employed all her cunning and interested her lady against me; so that to get out of the reach of such a megera, and for the sake of the family's quiet, I thought proper to withdraw from that family, foreseeing that my long abiding there would be a daily cause of uneasiness, by the wicked machinations of the rejected Jezabel. Before my departure I left a fair and liquidated account of my stewardship.

Being master of a horse, and a tolerable sum in cash, I pursued my original plan of making the tour of Spain, in order to see and reside a while in all the famous cities. The next I repaired to, after leaving Don Alphonso, was Granada; where I reached in safety, notwithstanding the least accident (contrary to my usual luck) having happened to me in the way thither.

One of the first persons I met in the streets of Granada was Don Fernand de Levya, brother in law to Don Alphonso, who being married to Seraphina's sister, was consequently son in law of the count de Polan, the father of the two ladies. We were equally surprized at meeting each other.

"Why, how now Gil Blas, who could expect to see you in this city? what particular business has brought you hither?" he thus answered his desire. "Since, Don Fernand, you are surprized at seeing me here, you would be much more so, were you to know the reason why I have quitted the

"service

service of Don Cæsar, and of his son Don Alphonso."

At his request, I informed Don Fernand, which made him laugh very heartily. He afterwards told me with a serious countenance, that, if I pleased, he would employ my mediation to have me reinstated, and for that purpose would write forthwith to his sister law. "No, no, good Don Fernand," replied I, "do not write; for when I left Don Alphonso's service, it was with a resolution of not returning to it. But, since you are so generous as to make me, unworthy as I am, an offer of your friendship, be so kind, if any among your friends or relations should want a secretary or intendant, to honour me with your recommendation for such places. On my side, I will take care that you shall have no reason to repent."

"With all my soul," most courteously rejoined Don Fernand, "I will do all in my power to to serve you. My business to Granada is to see an old aunt; wherefore, I shall remain here three weeks before I propose returning to my beloved spouse Julia, at my patrimonial castle of Serquin. I reside, during my stay here, in this hotel," said Don Fernand, pointing to one at an hundred paces distance from us) "where be sure do you call every day, that you may have early information in case I should  
"hear

“hear of any place not unworthy of your acceptance.”

It was too much my interest to neglect so friendly an invitation, and upon my first visit in consequence, Don Fernand informed me with great pleasure, that the archbishop of Granada, his relation and friend, wanted a young man who had some tincture of letters and could write a good hand, to transcribe his works, for the archbishop was a voluminous author. He told me that his grace had composed the lord knows how many volumes of homilies, and that he continued still to compose, and utter them with universal applause.

Don Fernand added, “Now, Gil Blas, I think you capable of answering all his wants, I have recommended, and he has promised to receive you. Therefore, go and present yourself to him in my name.” You will readily gather from his reception of you, how warmly I have spoken in your favour.

This appeared to me a place conformable to my most sanguine desires. Therefore, having equipped myself in the most decent manner, I went in a morning or two after to pay my devoirs at the archbishoprick. Were I now to imitate the writers of romance, I should here give a pompous description of the episcopal palace at Granada, expatiate on the architecture of the edifice, extol the richness of the furniture, enumerate and point out the beauties



beauties of all the pictures and statues there; nay, I should not spare my reader the least article to be met with. But I think it enough for my present purpose, to say that it equalled a royal palace in magnificence.

I found in the outer apartments a crowd of ecclesiasticks, and others wearing swords, who were for the most part his grace's officers, to wit, his almoner, gentlemen, and valets de chambre. The lay servants particularly were so finely dressed, that one might easily have taken them for noblemen rather than domestics: moreover they affected very haughty and consequential airs.

I could not help smiling at the arrogant behaviour those reptiles exhibited, and said I within myself, "how insensible must those fellows be of their servile state, for if they were truly conscious of their condition, they certainly would behave with more humility."

I addressed myself to a lusty, grave looking person, who waited at the archbishop's closet door, to open and shut it as occasion should require. I asked him in the politest manner I could, if there were any means of speaking to his grace.

The fellow scarce deigned to answer me, and that with a costly and forbidding countenance, "His grace, friend, will soon pass by, going to say mass, and may perhaps honour you with a moment's audience." I armed myself with patience, and in order to beguile the time till his grace should appear,

pear, I attempted to join in conversation with some of his officers. They in a supercilious manner surveyed me from head to foot, without deigning to give me a syllable of answer; then mutually signified to each other, with a look of contempt, their joint opinion of my impudence, to have dared to force my conversation on (no doubt) persons of their rank.

I own myself weak enough to have been totally disconcerted by such treatment from valets. I had scarce recovered from my confusion when the closet door was opened. His grace appeared. At his coming forth, his late impertinent jabbering officers assumed a most respectful silence, and to their haughty airs succeeded a most submissive countenance in the presence of their master.

The archbishop of Granada was in the sixty ninth year of his age, and in figure not unlike to my uncle Gil Perez the Cannon, that is, low and fat. Besides his legs were turned inwards. His head was so bald that but one lock of hair remained behind, which obliged him to defend it from the inclemency of the weather by a large fine woollen cap with long ears.

Notwithstanding all those discommendatory circumstances, I fancied that I discovered in him all the air of a nobleman, and that perhaps, because I knew him to be such. We people of plebeian rank look up to men of family with eyes greatly prejudiced in their behalf,

half, and often attribute to them marks of greatness, not vouched by nature.

The archbishop advanced towards me, and asked in a tone of the politest condescension, "What was my business." I answered his grace, that I was the young man recommended to him by Don Fernand his relation. Without letting me proceed any farther, he said, "So then, you are the young man he has given me so great a character of. You are one of my household, I look upon you as a valuable acquisition; therefore, henceforward, this is to be your place of residence."

His grace then resting himself on the arms of two valets de chambre, after a short audience to some clergymen, moved off. The archbishop was scarce got out of the room, when those very officers in waiting, who had before despised my conversation; as studiously solicited it. They not only crowded about me, but were metamorphosed into the very pinks of courtesy, expressing the greatest joy on my being installed one of the archbishop's household.

Having overheard the words their master said to me, they were in the utmost anxiety to know what place I should occupy. But I had the malicious pleasure of baulking their curiosity, in order to be revenged on them for their late contempt of me.

His grace soon returned, and made a sign for me to follow him into his closet, that he might there confer with me in private. I rightly  
F guesed

guessed that it was with a design of sounding my capacity. I was therefore upon my guard, and measured every word of answer I made him.

He first examined me in humanity. I answered all his questions very pertinently. Finding me master of the Greek and Latin authors, his grace's next attack on me was in logic. That was the point I wished to come at, for there he found me unaffailable. Upon which he was pleased to say with some surprize, "Friend Gil Blas, you have had a very good education. Let me now see your hand-writing."

I drew out of my pocket a written sheet of paper that I had brought on purpose; with which the good prelate was very well pleased: and thus expressed his satisfaction. "I am even more pleased with your hand-writing than your wit. I shall thank my nephew Don Fernand for having recommended me so clever a lad. It is absolutely a present he has made me."

Here we were interrupted by some noblemen of Granada come to dine with his grace. I withdrew in order to leave them together, and joined the officers in waiting, who were lavish in their politeness to me. When the hour of table was come I sat down with them, and if on one hand, all their attention was to examine me, mine was no less occupied about them.

Each

Each of the ecclesiastic's countenances appeared to be the throne of prudence. They had all, to me, the appearance of holy personages; so warped was my mind, by the respect conceived for them from the place, in which I saw them.

I did not harbour the least suspicion that all this was counterfeit, imagining that hypocrisy could not exist within the sacred precincts of episcopal palaces.

My place at table happened to be near an old valet de chambre, whose name was Me-chior de la Rolanda. He took care to help me to all the tit-bits. His attention for me begot a return on my side, and my polite deportment towards him, so far gained me his friendship, that after dinner he whispered me in the ear, that he would be glad to have a private conference with me.

We retired to a remote part of the palace, where no body could overhear the purport of his discourse, which he thus began, "Young man, from the first moment I saw, I felt a friendly disposition for you, and in order to give you an undeniable proof thereof, I am going to impart to you matters, the knowledge whereof must be highly advantageous to you. You live here in a palace, where the truly devout and hypocrites are indiscriminately mixed together.

"As it would require a very long time to know perfectly this new world you are embarked in, by your own experience, I am

“ resolved to exempt you from the necessity of  
“ so disagreeable a task, by exhibiting to you  
“ the different characters that reside in this  
“ palace.”

“ I shall begin with my lord the archbi-  
“ shop. He is indeed a very pious prelate,  
“ whose principal occupation is to instruct his  
“ people, and make them pursue the paths of  
“ virtue, which he paints to them in excel-  
“ lent moral discourses of his own composi-  
“ tion. He has quitted the court about twenty  
“ years, that he might dedicate his time en-  
“ tirely to the zeal he has of edifying his  
“ flock. He is, doubtless, a learned man, and  
“ a great orator. His chief delight is to  
“ preach, and his auditors are always in rap-  
“ tures to hear him.

“ Perhaps all this zeal of instructing is not  
“ totally devoid of some tincture of vanity.  
“ But, as it is not for us to scrutinize the  
“ hearts of others, it would but ill become  
“ me to censure the proceedings of him in  
“ whose service I live so happily. There is  
“ one article, however, for which I think his  
“ lordship reproachable, that is, his severity.

“ So far is he from having any indulgence for  
the foibles of churchmen, that he punishes  
them with the greatest rigour. He persecutes  
most unmercifully, those, who, relying on  
their innocence, would justify themselves ju-  
ridically in contempt of his archiepiscopal au-  
thority. He has besides another failing, not  
indeed



indeed particular to him, but very common among the great."

"You prick up your ears, Gil Blas, to know what that failing is; I will tell you. It is, that though his grace loveth his domesticks, yet he does not make their services sufficiently the object of his attention. For he lets them grow old without procuring any establishment. And those who sometimes receive gratifications from him, are not so much to attribute it to his own feelings, as to the kindness of some intermediary who has spoken in their behalf; for if left to himself until the end of time, he would never think of any such remuneration."

This is the exact picture the old valet de chambre gave me of his master. He afterwards told me his candid opinion of all the clergy with whom we had dined. The portraits he drew of them were very different from the countenances they had assumed. He did not indeed represent them to me as dishonest men, but only as indifferent priests. He excepted a few among them, whose virtue he extolled very much.

Being thus provided with a chart of the country I was in, I knew what semblance to put on with those church gentry, and that very night at supper I exhibited all the composed airs of sanctification, which is no difficult task to whoever sets his mind about it; and is the obvious reason that we ought not

to be surprized at the number of hypocrites we meet in society.

Having brought all my things from the inn to my chamber in the episcopal palace, by his grace's order, I was next morning early summoned to attend him; it was to give me a homily to be transcribed. He recommended to me over and over, to copy it with the most scrupulous exactness, which I took care to do, not an accent, punctum, or even virgula was omitted.

The archbishop was most agreeably surprized at my elegant execution. As he ran over the several pages of the copy, "Eternal father," cried he, in raptures, "was ever any transcript so correct. From the exactness of this copy, I conclude, Gil Blas, that you must be an excellent grammarian, therefore conceal nothing from, but act with me as a friend. Say ingenuously, as you copied, did nothing occur that to you appeared exceptionable; for example, inaccuracy of style or impropriety of expression?"

"O my Lord," replied I, with the most studied air of modesty, "I am not learned enough to make critical observations, &c. if I were, I dare assert that your grace's writings are above the reach of criticism." The prelate's smile denoted his being pleased with what I said; but he made me no answer. I perceived, however, through his great piety, that he had all the feelings of an author.

This

This last flattery quite established me in his esteem. I daily became dearer to him; and, by the by, learned from Don Fernand, who came often to see his uncle, that I might look upon my fortune as made, and I was some time after confirmed in the soothing opinion by my master himself, and on this occasion.

He repeated one evening before me in his closet with great warmth, and a kind of enthusiasm, a homily that he was to utter the following day in his cathedral. Not satisfied to have my opinion of the said piece in general, he insisted on my telling him the particular passages with which I was the most affected. I was lucky enough to quote him those with which he himself was the most satisfied.

This rivetted me in his opinion as a man of sound judgment, and delicate taste of all the beauties in a production of wit. Nor could he contain himself, "There needs no other trial, Gil Blas, to prove you a connoisseur. I will vouch for you that your intellects are not Beotian." Nay, his grace was so delighted with me that he added, "Gil Blas, be no longer uneasy about your fortune in this world. I take it upon me, that it shall be according to your heart's desire. I have an affection for you, and that you may not doubt it, I declare you my confidant."

His grace had no sooner said these words, than I fell at his knees, penetrated with the

most lively sense of gratitude. He said by way of answer to my respectful humiliation :  
 “ Listen, Gil Blas, attentively to what I am  
 “ going to say. As I mean that you shall be  
 “ henceforth the depositary of all my secrets :  
 “ you must know that I am fond of preach-  
 “ ing, and indeed God has been pleased to  
 “ bleis my homilies with a sacred unction ;  
 “ for many a sinner has been reclaimed by  
 “ them, and washed away the remembrance  
 “ of his former trespasses, with the tears  
 “ of repentance.”

“ I have often had the pleasure of observ-  
 “ ing the avaricious man scared by the images  
 “ I drew before him of his wickedness, to  
 “ open his purse to the needy, and strive, as  
 “ it were, to buy his forgiveness. I have  
 “ often frightened libertines from their fa-  
 “ vourite pleasures ; and made the ambitious  
 “ become hermits. Many a wife, almost se-  
 “ duced by an agreeable wooer, has been  
 “ saved through the energy of my arguments.

“ The great number of conversions I make  
 “ is motive enough, were there no other, for  
 “ my continuing to preach. I will, however,  
 “ unbosom myself to you, honest Gil Blas ;  
 “ besides the great object of saving souls,  
 “ there is a little dash of vanity in my pro-  
 “ ceeding, for I reproach myself with being  
 “ extremely desirous that my homilies should  
 “ be esteemed as standards for correctness and  
 “ elegance of style. Not to mince the mat-

“ ter,



“ter, I own that the reputation of being a  
“perfect orator has charms for me.”

“My works are in general esteemed for  
“their strength and delicacy, but I would  
“fain, under the pilotage of your exquisite  
“judgment, escape the rock on which so  
“many great writers have split; that is, their  
“composing too long, to the running down  
“of their fame. For my part, I would fain  
“retire betimes, with an unexceptionable  
“character of eloquence.”

“For this end then, Gil Blas, I demand  
“one act of friendship at your hands; which  
“is, that when you shall perceive my stile  
“lose its usual vigour, through advancing  
“age: in short, when you shall discover me  
“to be on the decline, you will be so inge-  
“nuous as to give me notice thereof.”

“On so nice an article there is no de-  
“pending on one’s self, being too interested  
“on the flattering side. I therefore make  
“choice of your judgment, which I know  
“to be excellent, and have an absolute reli-  
“ance on.” I rejoined with a zealous ear-  
“nestness. “Thank heaven, my lord, you are  
“far from the enfeebling period of life. Be-  
“sides, so strong a genius as yours will rather  
“grow more vigorous, than be impaired by  
“years, as did that of the famous cardinal  
“Ximenes.”

His grace replied, “Come, no flattery,  
“Gil Blas, I know I may fall off on the  
“sudden, as others have done before me.

“ Moreover, at my age the infirmities of nature begin to be felt, and the weakness of the mind follows that of the body. Therefore, I earnestly repeat to you, Gil Blas, that when you shall perceive the least symptom of weakness in my homilies, you (as in duty bound) will give me immediate notice.”

“ Do not apprehend any bad consequence from your frankness and sincerity. No, the more undisguised will be your admonition, the more kindly shall I receive it, and look upon it as an irrefragable proof of your attachment to me. Besides, Gil Blas, observe, it will be your interest so to do, for, I declare, should I learn any other part, that my discourses lose of their wonted energy, and that it is high time for me to retire from the pulpit, I will not forgive your remissness, but what is more, withdraw my friendship, and so punish your foolish discretion.”

Here the prelate stopt to hear my answer, which was, that I should scrupulously conform to his request. From that moment he kept nothing a secret from me. I was his distinguished favourite, and was envied for it by all his grace's household, except my honest monitor Melchior de la Ronda.

It was really curious to see in what manner they all behaved themselves towards their master's confidant. Every meanness was put in practice to gain my benevolence. I could scarce think



think them Spaniards, they appeared so entirely devoid of all pride.

I rendered them every service I could, without being in the least the dupe of their interested politeness to me. At my intercession, the archbishop, contrary to his usual custom, bestirred himself to procure them establishments. He got a company for one, and supplied him with cash to figure in his corps. He had another sent to Mexico, in order to fill up a considerable employment there; and for my friend Melchior I obtained a very good gratuity. By the prelate's compliance, I experienced, that if it had not been his custom to be beforehand with peoples wishes, he could not refuse a boon when solicited.

The service I rendered to a clergyman deserves a particular detail. One day a licentiate called Lewis Garcias, was presented to me by our major domo, who told me at the same time that he was one of his best friends, had been chaplain to a convent of nuns; but that calumny having spread so many base reports against him, the archbishop was so highly enraged, as to be deaf to all solicitations in his behalf, to take off the interdict under which he laboured. We have already, but in vain, got some of the first noblemen in Granada to intercede for us. His grace has hitherto been inflexible to all entreaty.

To which my answer was, "This affair  
 " has been entirely ruined by an over-earnest  
 " solicitation. I know his lordship; this is  
 " no

“ not the way to gain upon him. Prayers and  
“ recommendations will but irritate him the  
“ more against your friend the licentiate, who  
“ has been so unhappy as to fall under his  
“ displeasure.”

My reason to say so, is from hearing him  
declare lately, “ That the more a clergyman,  
“ guilty of any wrong step, shall employ in-  
“ tercession with me, it will only serve to cor-  
“ roborate the scandal propagated against him  
“ and my severity in consequence.”

“ That is a very unlucky circumstance,”  
replied the major domo, “ and my friend must  
“ inevitably be reduced to the last misery,  
“ were it not that he writes a good hand,  
“ which in the worst of times may procure  
“ him a pittance. That he writes an admi-  
“ rable hand his greatest enemy cannot  
“ deny.”

My curiosity being excited to see if the dis-  
graced ecclesiastic's hand answered to the high  
character given of it; he having some about  
him presented it to me. The penmanship was  
admirable I own; it was equal to a master's  
copy for scholars to write after.

A thought having struck me, as I contem-  
plated the licentiate's writing, I prayed him  
to leave with me the written paper of his, I  
had then in hand, hinting to him that I might  
make it turn out advantageous to him. He  
cheerfully left it with me, and relying on the  
character our major domo had already given  
him

him of my genius, he looked upon himself as already reinstated in his sacred functions.

My earnest desire was, that he should; and from that very day, I set about getting him reinstated in the following manner. Being alone with the archbishop, I shewed him the writing of the licentiate Garcias, who seemed charmed therewith.

I therefore seized on the occasion, and thus addressed his grace. "Since your lordship will not consent to let your homilies be printed, I wish to see them all transcribed in so fair a hand as this." "Why, Gil Blas," answered the prelate more condescendingly, "I own, I am well enough pleased with your hand-writing, yet, I confess, I should not be sorry to see a copy of my works transcribed in the hand you shew me."

"Your grace," rejoined I, need only speak the word, and it shall be executed, for the man who writes so fair a hand is a licentiate of my acquaintance, and he will be so much the more overjoyed to acquit himself of the said task to your grace's satisfaction, as it may be the means of extricating him from his present unhappy situation."

His lordship immediately asked, what was the licentiate's name? I answered, Lewis Garcias, who is now in the greatest affliction for having incurred your disgrace. "If I mistake not," rejoined the prelate, "that Lewis Garcias

“ Garcius has been chaplain to a convent of  
“ nuns, and for misdemeanours is now under  
“ ecclesiastic censure. I remember I have re-  
“ ceived several memorials against him; he  
“ leads a bad life.”

Here I interrupted his grace, by saying,  
“ I would undertake to plead his justification;  
“ that I very well knew he had many ene-  
“ mies: who, according to the licentiate’s  
“ declaration, were more zealous to decry  
“ him, than to alledge nothing but the truth.”  
“ That may very well be,” added the arch-  
bishop, “ besides, perhaps, his conduct has  
“ not hitherto been the most regular; he, may  
“ however see his folly, and repent. Repen-  
“ tance atones for every sin. Therefore I take  
“ off his interdiction, and do you Gil Blas  
“ present him to me.”

Thus the most rigid mortals gradually abate  
of their severity, when they find it interferes  
with their favourite passion. The archbishop  
granted to the vain desire of seeing his works  
well transcribed, a favour which he had refused  
to the most powerful solicitations.

I carried the news immediately to the major  
domo, who, without any delay, had his friend  
informed thereof. The licentiate next day  
came and thanked me in the best manner he  
said he was able, for so great an obligation.  
I forthwith presented him to the archbishop,  
who, after a slight reprimand, gave him one  
of his homilies to draw a fair copy of, which  
task the soon reinstated Garcias acquitted him-  
self

self so well of, that he obtained, besides the rectorship of Gabia, a large town in the neighbourhood of Granada.

While I was thus rendering all the service I could to whoever applied, or was recommended to me, Don Fernand prepared to depart from Granada, on his return home. I went to pay him a visit before his departure, and thank him anew for the excellent post he had procured me. On his side, he expressed great satisfaction at my being so well pleased with the place I occupied.

Two months after Don Fernand had left Granada, when I was in the full sweep of favour, we were all greatly alarmed in the episcopal palace. The archbishop was seized with an apoplectic fit. Every kind of medicinal succour was immediately brought to him, and they so effectually operated as to cure him in a few days.

Though his body was healed his mind was not, having greatly suffered by that attack, which I remarked in the very first homily he delivered after his recovery. However, the difference from this to his preceding ones, was not sufficient to pronounce him absolutely fallen from his former excellence. But alas, his second left no room to doubt his declining abilities; such up and down work, such inequality of stile, such monkish prolixity reigned throughout.

I was not the only one who observed it, for most of the audience, as if set on purposely, whispered

whispered each other ; this homily has a strong twang of the apoplexy. This was more than a sufficient hint for me to discharge my promise to his grace, on the failure of which I was to incur his displeasure, forfeit his friendship, and perhaps be razed out of his will.

I was embarrassed as to the manner in which I should break my mind to him, but this perplexity he soon relieved me from, by demanding how his last homily was liked, as well as what the people in general said of it and him.

I answered, that his homilies were admired as usual, but however his last did not affect his audience as much as his former had done. “What then,” tartly replied the archbishop, “I suppose some archi-critic has pronounced his opinion upon it.” “Not at all, my lord,” rejoined I submissively, “your works are above the reach of criticism. Every hearer is charmed with them. All I would insinuate (and that pursuant to your own injunction) is, that I should deal frankly and ingenuously with you ; you will, therefore, I hope, pardon me the liberty of informing you that your last homily did not appear to me to have the spirit and strength of your preceding ones ; and, no doubt, your lordship is of my opinion.”

The archbishop grew pale at so unexpected a remonstrance, and with a feigned smile retorted, “So then, master Gil Blas, this last piece of mine does not hit your taste.”

“Forgive



“Forgive me, my lord,” quoth I, quite disconcerted, “I do not say so, I think it a good piece, though inferior to your other works.”

“I understand you, sir,” said he, “only, I decline in your opinion, and you think it high time I should retire from the pulpit, is it not so?”

“I should never, my lord, (but in strict obedience to your grace’s special mandate) have dared to take this liberty with you : and therefore humbly hope that it may not be imputed to me as a fault.”

“God forbid,” said the archbishop, in a kind of trepidation, “that I should be angry with you. Far from me be any such unjust proceeding. It is not the liberty of telling your sentiment displeases me ; it is the sentiment itself.” What a dupe have I been to a person of so limited an understanding !

Finding myself in the wrong box, I strove to mend matters as well as I could ; but alas, what method is there to appease an irritated author, a powerful one too, and used to adulation. “He forbid me to speak any more on so disagreeable a subject ; said, I was as yet too young to be capable of distinguishing truth from falsehood ; and, as a proof, friend,” quoth he, “know that I never composed so fine a homily in my life as that which has the misfortune of not meeting with your approbation. Thanks be to heaven, I do not feel as yet that my mental faculties

“ faculties have lost in the least their usual vigour.  
 “ But, for the future, I shall be a little  
 “ more cautious how and whom I make a  
 “ confidant. I must chuse persons of more  
 “ intelligence than my shallow friend Gil Blas.”

At which cutting expression he pushed me out of his closet, saying, “ Go to my treasurer, “ bid him give you a hundred ducats, with “ which God prosper you. B’y to you, master “ Gil Blas. I wish you all sort of success, “ and a little more taste.”

As I went from the closet I cursed the archbishop’s caprice, or rather weakness ; being more angered at his absurdity, than afflicted by the privation of his favour. My proud stomach even was suspended for some time, whether I should go and receive the hundred ducats ; but reason prevailing, I called for them, and as soon as they were told to me by the treasurer, to whom I did not make the least mention of my disgrace, I went to take my leave of Melchior de la Ronda : who (as I guessed he would be) was very much affected by my misfortune, and gave me good advice for my future conduct in life ; particularly, to rather swallow than resent any ill treatment from the great, who, though seldom in a disposition of rendering service to their inferiors, have it but too often in their power to prejudice them. He desired, when I should be at Madrid, to visit his friend Joseph Navarro.

I hired a ready-furnished lodging in Granada. There I proposed to stay some time.

When

When it grew near the hour of dinner, I enquired of my landlady, if there were a good eating house in the neighbourhood. She answered, that within a few doors there were a very good one. I repaired thither immediately.

I was shewed into a salon that was not unlike to a refectory. There I saw ten or a dozen men, seated at a long table covered with a dirty cloth, discoursing each other as they eat their scanty portions. One was served to me, which, at any other time would have made me regret the plentiful table I was discarded from.

As I had just dispatched my frugal meal, who should come into the eating house upon the same errand I was there, but the licentiate Lewis Garcias, whom I had got reinstated in despite of his enemies, and moreover made him rector of Gabia. On perceiving he came up to me with all the expressive demonstrations of one who feels the most lively joy. He embraced me most affectionately, and almost overwhelmed with acknowledgments of the service I had rendered him.

“ I hope then, in God’s name, since I have  
 “ the luck of meeting my noble patron Gil  
 “ Blas, that we shall not part without drink-  
 “ ing a bottle together,” said the licentiate,  
 “ but as the wine is not very good here, I  
 “ will bring you to a place where I can an-  
 “ swer for the excellence of it. How rejoiced  
 “ should

“ should I be to have the honour of enter-  
 “ taining you for a few days at the parsonage-  
 “ house of Gabia. There you should be re-  
 “ ceived as the generous Mecenas to whom I  
 “ owe my present happy situation.”

As he made these warm professions of gra-  
 titude, his dinner was laid before him. He in-  
 terrupted his eating from time to time, to say  
 something civil to me. In order to let him  
 dispatch his meal without any farther inter-  
 ruption, I spoke to him in my turn.

Garcias asked me, how his good friend the  
 major domo was. I then informed the licen-  
 tiate of my having left the archbishop. I re-  
 lated to him the minutest circumstance relative  
 thereunto. All which he listened to with a most  
 profound attention.

After all the licentiate's professions of gra-  
 titude, who would not have expected to hear  
 him, at least, run out in invectives against the  
 archbishop? his feelings, it seems, were cast  
 in another mould. The warmth and joy of his  
 countenance at seeing me, gradually disappeared,  
 he began to look cold, thoughtful, and finished  
 his dinner without replying one word to me;  
 then rose from table, made me a very distant  
 salute, and marched off.

The ungrateful varlet, knowing I could no  
 longer be of any service to him, spared him-  
 self the trouble of ever letting me know his  
 sentiments upon my disgrace. In the first  
 movement of my passion I could not but laugh

at

at the rascal's baseness, and looking after him with the contempt he deserved from me, I called out, loud enough to be heard by all around,—Hi, hollo, you chaste chaplain to a convent of nuns, be sure run to and indulge in that excellent wine you are so fond of.

Having amused myself for some time by frequenting theatres, and making myself acquaintances, I at last, in order to shun the consequences of an affair that might turn out very much to my disadvantage, bargained with a muleteer to carry me to Toledo, where we reached in four days, and having made but a short delay there, I set out for Madrid on a returned horse which I hired, and put up in a house of furnished lodgings there.

I took pleasure in going frequently to the king's palace, where I beheld the great ones eclipsed, and deprived of all the splendor that attends them in other places. I was greatly surprized one day as I saw a figure elegantly dressed, in deep discourse with a courtier. It was the identical **Fabricio**, whom I thought I had left at Valladolid, servant to an hospital director. He soon knew me, and put a thousand questions, particularly concerning all that might have befallen me since we had seen each other last. He then asked what brought me to Madrid, and if I was in any employment.

We retired to a proper place to give him a satisfactory account. By his means I soon got the place of superintendant of his household, with a noble Sicilian, Count Galiano. In return

turn for all my honest endeavours to prevent his being plundered by the continuation of his servants, and saving him in a short time a large sum of money : when I lay sick of a fever he had me carried out of his house ; and the first news I learned on my recovery was, that I had no master : the count having set out from Madrid some days before, without thinking of his promise to give me a good establishment in Sicily.

But so inured had I been to returns of misfortune, that I was not so much affected by this disappointment as at other times I might. Having also learned that my friend Fabricio was also gone for about three weeks to Andalusia, with the duke of Medinafidonia, it came into my head to look for Melchior de la Ronda's nephew, whose name was Joseph Navarro, and who lived with Don Baltazar de Zuniga. I repaired to the said nobleman's house, and enquired for Navarro, who immediately appeared to me.

As soon as I made myself known to him, and in virtue of the letters from his uncle, wherein favourable mention was made of me, he received me most cordially, desired me to look upon him and use him as my friend, which I did, and found him to act up to his kind invitation, and in a few days he informed me with great chearfulness, that he had got an exceeding good place for me.

It was to make me steward to Don Diego de Montefer, receiver to the duke of Lerma,  
prime



prime minister of Spain; who, through Navarro's recommendation, gave me a most gracious reception. My principal employment was to visit all the different farms, and collect their rents from the tenants; of which, every month I gave an exact account, and paid them in to Don Diego.

The castle of the duke of Lerma having taken fire, more than half of it was reduced to ashes. I went to visit the ruins, of which I gave so picturesque an account, that the duke, notwithstanding his grief for what he had lost, enquired who was the author. Don Diego told him, giving me at the same time very high commendations, which were the remote cause of the promotion I was raised to some time after; for at the death of one of the duke's secretaries, he immediately appointed that place for me, desired Montefier to inform me thereof, and send me to him. Montefier at the same time gave me this friendly advice. "In all your actions appear entirely devoted to the duke's service; and to be sure never to fail paying your court to Don Calderone his favourite, and who leads him as he pleases.

I soon learned to play my part; and by being officious and pliant, was, by degrees, raised to, and went through all the science of court iniquity, where is but little room for persons actuated by conscience or honour.

So intoxicated was I with my place, ministerial favour, daily accruing emoluments,  
&c.

&c. that I totally forgot myself and all my friends, as will appear by the following picture.

I was become so great a coxcomb as to speak of the first personages about court with the greatest familiarity. For example, if I had occasion to make mention of the dukes of Alba, of Medina-Sidonia, Ossonia, &c. I said plainly Medina-Sidonia, Alba, Ossonia. I had lost all sight of my origin, and had quite forgot my poor parents.

But to mortify my arrogance, a young country lad having come one morning, and said that he had matters of consequence to speak to me of in private, I bad him follow me to my closet, where I seated myself in a great chair, and with gestures of importance, but did not ask him to sit down, looking upon him as one of the common herd. I then demanded with a voice of authority, what was his business with me?

“How, Gil Blas,” replied he, with an air of good-natured simplicity, “do not you remember me? I am your townsman, a native of Oviedo. I am the son of Bertrand Muscada the grocer, who lives not far from your uncle the canon’s house. I remember you very well, Gil Blas, we have often played at blind man’s buff together.”

Stung with my neighbour’s familiarity, I coldly answered, “I really have but a very confused remembrance of the amusement of my boyish days. The weighty affairs I  
“have

“ have been charged with since, have quite  
 “ effaced them from my memory.”

The simple play-fellow of my younger years rejoined, “ I am come, sir, to Madrid, to settle with my father’s correspondent; and before my setting out, having heard a great deal of you, and that you are here in a very high rank of life, and rich as a Jew, I came to pay you my compliments thereon; and as soon as returned home, shall fill your family with joy, by confirming so agreeable a report.”

At his mentioning my family, I could not avoid making some enquiry how my father, mother, and uncle were; but I did it in so cold a manner, that the young grocer of Oviedo, shocked at my indifference, thus bluntly reproached me.

“ I thought, Mr. Gil Blas, that you had more  
 “ good nature than to enquire about your  
 “ friends in so cold a manner. Then, sir, learn  
 “ from me, that your father and mother are  
 “ still in service; and that your uncle, the  
 “ worthy canon Gil Perez, whelmed with  
 “ age and infirmities, draws near his end. A  
 “ little feeling for poor helpless parents is not  
 “ beneath a great man. Therefore, since by the  
 “ blessing of God you are in such affluence, I  
 “ advise you as a friend to send them two hundred pistoles every year; which remittance, without being the least inconvenience to  
 “ you, will enable them to pass the remainder

“ of their life, which cannot be long, in ease  
“ and happiness.”

Instead of being moved by his picture of my parents situation, I was offended at the liberty he took, without my having given him any encouragement. With a little art he might, perhaps, have prevailed on me to do something; but his coarse frankness nettled me: which he perceiving, continued his exhortation, with perhaps not so much charity towards my parents, as malice to fret my pride.

Not able to bear his impertinence any longer, I stopt him short; “ Hark you, friend Musceda; trouble yourself about your own affairs. It well becomes a fellow like you “ to dictate what I ought to do!” I then took the ranswering grocer by the shoulder, thrust him out of my closet, and bid him return home to Oviedo to sell his pepper and cloves.

What Musceda said to me left a deep impression, that recalled to mind the care my poor father and mother took of me in my younger days. I felt some inclinations of gratitude that soon passed away: many an indulgent parent has been thus neglected by a forgetful child.

Avarice and ambition had taken such an entire possession of me, that I was quite another being. I lost my usual gaiety, I became a pensive absent man, and on the whole a very silly animal. Nay, my friend Fabricio seeing me totally devoted to the vile passion  
of

of amassing a fortune at any rate, visited me but seldom.

One day, however, he broke his mind to me.  
 “ Why truly, Gil Blas, you are no longer the  
 “ man I formerly knew you. Before your com-  
 “ mencing courtier, you enjoyed a serene mind;  
 “ but since that time, you always appear as if  
 “ agitated by inward commotions. You form  
 “ project upon project to enrich yourself, and  
 “ the more wealth you have, the more you  
 “ would fain accumulate; besides, your be-  
 “ haviour in regard to me is quite altered:  
 “ there is no longer the same free, easy be-  
 “ haviour; and in mere acts of politeness to-  
 “ wards me, there is an affected air of dis-  
 “ tance and mystery. I must now forsooth  
 “ dance attendance in your anti-chamber, and  
 “ wait to be announced, who formerly had  
 “ ready access to you at any time.

“ On the whole it appears to me, from your  
 “ starch conduct, that my visits are rather irk-  
 “ some to you than otherwise; therefore let  
 “ us break off all farther intercourse; you will  
 “ thereby get rid of a disagreeable censor of  
 “ your actions, and I of a haughty upstart,  
 “ that ridiculously forgets himself.”

Being more piqued than affected with Fa-  
 bricio's reproach, I let him go off without  
 making the least effort to stop him. The va-  
 nity my situation inspired me with, made me  
 think that I got by the loss of a poet's acquaint-  
 ance. In my ungrateful opinion, I thought  
 his loss more than amply compensated by my



newly acquired intimacy with several subaltern officers about court, mushroomed into life from no body knew where; and who owed their rise more to the capricious revolution of human affairs, than to any real merit of their own, although they thought quite otherwise.

Being equally forgetful of their mean pedigree as I was; from a similarity of disposition, we grew fond of each other, and seemed to be personages of the utmost consequence in our own eyes. O fortune, fortune! in general how dost thou dispense thy favours! the slave Epictetus was not in the wrong, when he compared thee to a young lady of birth, who prostitutes herself to valets.

In my full swing of pride, I was highly offended at a proposal of marrying a goldsmith's daughter. "What said I to the proposer, a man of my rank, a man of my fashion, a courtier of extensive views, debase himself so far as to marry a mechanic's daughter!" However, the examples of several noblemen about court being preached to me, as well as her great fortune of one hundred thousand ducats, I became tractable by degrees, visited and settled matters with the friends for our speedy marriage, which was to be in eight days after.

All necessary preparations being made on both sides, I spent the eve of the day fixed for the wedding at the house of my betrothed lady's father, where every thing was made as agreeable as possible to me. On my return home from thence, I had scarce been carried two hundred  
pages,



paces, when all on a sudden my coach was surrounded by twenty men, some on foot, some on horseback, armed with swords and carbines. They bid me stop in the king's name. I obeyed. They made me immediately quit my coach, and put me into a chaise, in which I was accompanied by their leader, who bid the driver make the best of his way to Segovia, where I was committed to the tower. I was put into a dungeon, having no bed but straw, like any common felon.

As next morning I made a thousand conjectures about what could be the cause of my confinement, one of the fellows of the jail brought me some bread and a pitcher of water for my day's allowance; I inveighed against the malignancy of my stars.

Tho', through the keeper of the prison's kindness (a man I had formerly obliged when living at the archbishop of Granada's), life was made as comfortable as possible to me; yet, upon receiving certain advice from Madrid how little hopes there were of my being soon enlarged, I fell sick of a violent fever, of which, when recovered, in spite of my physicians, I recovered also the use of my reason, and conceived for the uncertainty of the honours and riches I was lately possessed of, all the contempt they deserved.

I returned thanks to heaven for having thus visited me, and firmly resolved never to return to court, though the duke of Lerma should solicit me. I proposed to myself, in

case I should get out of prison, to purchase a cot in the country, and there lead the retired life of a philosopher.

My freedom being at last obtained, by the intercession of the young prince to the king his father, incensed against me through the contrivances of Calderom, my fellow secretary, for having pursued Catalina, I set out for Madrid in quest of the wreck my fortune had been exposed to, during my confinement; which having collected together, and being of no contemptible value, I prepared to return to Arragon.

I happened to meet Don Alphonso, who had been through my means, during my secretaryship with the duke of Lerma, named governor of Valencia. He prevailed on me to change my design of going to Arragon, and to live near him in a pretty country seat, he made me a present of, which I accepted: but I resolved that before I should take possession thereof, to make a tour to Asturias, to see my poor parents, whom I had too long neglected, and by way of reparation make them share the remains of my fortune, and retire to my asylum to end their days with me, far from the bustling world; with which being totally disturbed, I from that day most heartily renounced.

To fulfil my resolution, I never stopped till I reached Valladolid; from whence we got to Oviedo in four days without meeting any bad accident on the road. It was dark night by the time we got to Oviedo.

We

We took up our lodging at an inn not far distant from the house of my uncle, Gil Perez. As nothing could then afford me greater pleasure than to hear some news of my relations, I applied for information of them to my host, and by what I learn'd from him, he proved that I could not have address'd myself to a properer person.

He soon discovered who I was: for after having looked for a while very seriously on me, he cried out in raptures, " By saint Antony, " it is; yes it is our little Gil Blas, our arch " neighbour, that us'd formerly to come so " often (as I now imagine I see him) with a " bottle under his arm, to carry home wine " for his uncle's supper."

The thousand, to my host and hostesse's pleasing, but to me disagreeable, circumstances, which they emulously, as if to obtain a prize, remembered, and which I could most heartily have forgiven them being repeated over and over, I prayed them to give me some information of the situation of my family; and asked in what condition my poor father and mother were.

At that question they stopt their chattering, shook their heads, folded their arms, and looking for a time earnestly at each other, replied to me; " Why to tell the truth, they " are but in a very sad way; nay, you cannot " imagine people to be in a worse condition " than they are. Gil Blas has been paraly-

"tic for a long time, and in all probability  
 "can live but a very short time."

"Your father, sir, said she, has by his necessity been obliged to live with, and entirely  
 "upon the bounty of the canon, but he's  
 "now reduced to the last extremity, and it is  
 "expected that every day will prove his last;  
 "your poor mother serves as a nurse to them  
 "both, though indeed her health is much impaired."

Notwithstanding my pride was greatly hurt by this detail, yet filial affection got so far the better, as to hurry me without any delay to my uncle's, where my mother, who soon knew, embraced and told me, "My son, you  
 "are just come in time to see your father  
 "die."

She then conducted me to a little dark room where old Gil Blas de Santillane, my father, was drawing towards his last moment. My mother told him, "Here is your son Gil Blas  
 "returned home, and come to ask forgiveness  
 "for all the affliction he has given you."

At these words the poor old man turned towards me, and opened once more his eyes, about to close for ever. He looked stedfastly on me, and on perceiving that I was touched by the situation in which I saw him, he too was strongly affected with grief, would fain have spoke, but had not power, and then expired, as if he had only waited for a last sight of me, to depart from this life, the scene of so much misery.

My

My mother, having long before expected my father's death almost every day, felt no immoderate sorrow on the occasion. My concern for his loss was violent. I frequently reproached myself for my base ingratitude to have never succoured him. I almost looked upon myself as a vile parricide.

The next miserable object that struck my eyes, was my uncle the canon, who lay stretched on his bed, and in a deplorable condition. This sight gave a new keenness to my reproaches for my past behaviour to them.

"Nephew ungrateful, as a son unnatural; you might have prevented your family's being reduced to those wretched straits, if in the full and riotous career of thy vain prosperity, before thy imprisonment, thou hadst remitted to them any part of thy then superfluities; that, joined to the income of Gil Perez, prebend, would have supported the family in a very comfortable manner, and in all probability have prolonged thy father's life. But now alas! all such reflections are as idle as unprofitable."

I found my poor uncle in an absolute state of imbecillity. In vain did I press him in my arms; in vain did my mother repeatedly say to him, Brother Gil Perez, this is your long absent nephew Gil Blas, returned at last to ask your blessing and forgiveness for his past neglect of us."

Her reiterated speech proved as vain as my embraces to him; he was insensible to both.

I was



I was so deeply affected with the idiot state in which I beheld my uncle, that being unable to behold him any longer in that shocking plight I therefore turned away from it with my mother, who (as old women commonly are, being very fond of prolixity in narrative) kept me up the most part of the night in giving a long and circumstantial detail of every thing that happened to her, in the different services in which she had been, since my departure from Oviedo.

Her long history over, the good woman treated me (with a view no doubt of having a new matter of entertainment for her gossips and neighbours at their future meetings) that she should in my turn relate to her, in as particular a manner as she had to me, all that had happened to me since I saw her last.

I satisfied her desire in part, by giving her account of my transactions, but in a more succinct and cursory manner than she had told hers to me; at which she grumbled a little, and appeared to be not over satisfied at my being more niggard of speech than herself, which she told me, in a rebuking manner, was a mark in the main I wanted good nature and due respect. I softened her in the best manner I could, and told her I was then very much fatigued; but that at another time I should omit a tittle; with which promise she was satisfied.

To efface all the impressions that might have been made in her against me, by the evil



ports of several neighbours in Oviedo, particularly of the grocer's son Musceda, who had been with me during my good fortune at court, and whom I treated a little roughly, I assured her that my sole design of coming to Asturias was to better the situation of my family, and with them to enjoy the sweets of solitude, and the undisturbed happiness of a country life.

I added, that my father's decease, as well the helpless state of my uncle Gil Perez, to whom I was under so many obligations for all the advantages of his education, the main spring of his fortune, had thrown a gloom upon the pleasant scenes of rural life, which henceforward I proposed to enjoy.

She wept for joy at the good natured declaration, and said, she was convinced that all the reports which she had heard against my goodness of heart, were lies. I thereupon told her my resolution was, that as soon as my uncle should expire (who in all probability had but a few days to live) that if acceptable to her, I would take her with me to a little estate which I had purchased in the kingdom of Valencia; that it should be my principal happiness to make her pass the remainder of her days in happiness and consequence, in that delicious kingdom. "There, O mother! said I with some warmth, it shall be my constant study, by acts of filial duty, each day to make ample reparation for the scandalous neglect I have been guilty of to you, my father, and uncle, during my intoxication of fortune."

My

My mother's answer to me was, " That  
 " thanked me heartily for the kind offer, and  
 " would very readily accept of it, but for the  
 " insurmountable obstacle of leaving my un-  
 " derling behind, with whom she prayed me to let  
 " remain, and that if he should die soon, she  
 " would follow me to my estate in Valencia.

I consented to her request without any great  
 difficulty; left her a sufficient sum to defray  
 the necessary expence of burying my father, and  
 to support herself in decency, till such time  
 she might hear from me.

Having thus compromised matters with  
 mother, he set out for his abode in Valencia,  
 where he married soon after a young lady  
 of good family, by whom he had several children,  
 whose education he made the occupation and  
 amusement of his advancing years.

Since we have thus far accompanied Gil B...  
 through all the most entertaining occurrences  
 of his life, and conducted him safely to that retreat  
 in which he proposes to end his days; we shall  
 now by way of a *bonne bouche* present our readers  
 with a view of what sort of female, Arsenia,  
 actress, with whom he had lived, was; and  
 giving a view of the comedians then at Madrid.  
 It will appear to those acquainted with them  
 of other nations, that for self-sufficiency and appe-  
 tence, they are pretty near the same every where.  
 Arsenia's house was the rendezvous of  
 debauchees of all ages and professions, able

me up to her price, and the greatest caution was exacted by her maid-servant, that no one of her gallants should ever come to a knowledge of any others being intimate with her, but be weakly induced to believe that he alone enjoyed all her favours. There appeared, in consequence, a splendid profuseness of furniture in her house; there were presents from all parts of the world. Her house might, and not improperly, have been called the temple of a goddess, in which every traveller had deposited an offering of some of the curiosities of his country.

The consequence assumed by Arsenia, and her sister heroines, and some of the buskined dancers whom she used occasionally to invite to her table, in company with some gallants of the first rank in Madrid, abounded in a ridiculous solemnity. These, not vestal dames, would affect an air of the greatest importance during the repast; they worked up their imagination so far as to fancy themselves women of the first quality. And so far were they from addressing the noblemen present by their respective names, that they called them very familiarly by their names. The fault undoubtedly was the noblemen's for having so far indulged the vanity of such creatures, as to make them presume on a like freedom. But what was still more extraordinary the very actors from their being accustomed to act the parts of heroes, scrupled not to throw off all respect before their superiors; they hailed them as fellows well met, and took no lead in the conversation.

It

It happened one evening that Arsenia's company, consisted entirely of Actors and Actresses; they bid defiance to Eccho, and scandal was the word. All their absent comrades they dissected most unmercifully, and this is the only thing they have in common with authors. They grew eloquent in abuse, "You do not know" quoth Rosimiro "the droll affair of Cesarino. He bought this morning a quantity of silk stockings, ribbons, and ruffles, which he took care to have addressed to him to the green room, and carried thither by a page, as the present of some court lady"—at which report a general laugh ensued.

There would be no end to the relation of the many impertinent adventures they alternately furnished to vilify some of the acquaintance; but all such subjects were interrupted by Arsenia's servant coming in to inform her ladyship, that a person came to wait upon her, whom he took to be an author. The manner in which this poor devils was received by that histrionic groupe, may serve as a faithful mirror for all future authors. Arsenia's impudent valet expressed himself with a loud voice, looking around for the company's approbation, "Madam, a man in a dirty shirt, bedaggled almost up to the shoulders, and who saving your favour, has all the air of a poet, desires to see your ladyship."

"She

"Shew him up," replied Arsenia to her servant; and said to her visitors, "I pray that no one stir, or discompose themselves in the least for this visitor; for, by the description given of him, it must be an author:" so indeed he was. A tragedy of his writing had been received some time before by their company. He was then come to present his part to Arsenia: the bard's name was Pedro de Moya.

As he entered the room, he made five or six profound bows to the company, that neither deigned to rise nor to favour him with a return with the least return of salutation. Arsenia answered with very measured nods of her head to the many obliging things he said to her. When he had advanced as far as the middle of the room, all trembling, and quite disconcerted through confusion, he let fall his hat and gloves, which having gathered up as well as he could, considering his troubled state, he drew near Arsenia, and presented a neatly folded up manuscript to her with the most profound respect. "Madam" said he with a loud voice, "I vouchsafe to graciously receive the part, which I now take the liberty of presenting to you." Arsenia received it in a cold and contemptuous manner, not deigning to make the least answer to his compliment.

Don Pedro having too much at stake, solved not to be disgusted with any slighting

ing treatment he should receive, and to profit of that occasion to give their parts to other performers, who happened to be then present at Arsenia's; he delivered his to the famous actor Rosimiro, and her's to Florimonde, who both treated the author and his compliments, with the same indifference as Arsenia had done. Nay more, Rosimiro being a kind of a wag affected to crack some jokes upon, and make the poor poet the butt of his raillery, for the entertainment of his unworthy companions.

Don Pedro felt the insult in a most lively manner, but smothered all tokens of resenting it then, lest his tragedy should suffer in consequence. He bit his lips and withdrew without replying a word, though filled internally for them with that contempt which the acting tribe too justly deserve from all ranks of ingenious, and honest men.

He had scarce been gone out of the room, when those theatrical wretches fell upon authors (to whom the ingrates owed their existency, being but the parrots of the bard in a most insolent manner. Florimonde added, "My dear Arsenia the bard Don Pedro methinks went off not overpleased."

"Lord madam, cried Rosimiro, why do you trouble yourself about such things; are authors forsooth objects worthy of our attention? were we to put ourselves upon



“ upon a footing with them, it would be  
 “ the sure means of spoiling them. I know  
 “ what kind of gentry authors are. Upon  
 “ the least encouragement they would forget  
 “ themselves. Wherefore let us always keep  
 “ them under, treat them as our slaves,  
 “ and never scruple putting their patience  
 “ to the last trial. If chagrined by any  
 “ treatment of ours they keep aloof for some  
 “ time, the itch of scribbling soon drives  
 “ them back to us; and our consenting to  
 “ act a piece of theirs, makes them the  
 “ happiest of mortals.”

Besides their disrespectful treatment of authors, actors are guilty of another piece of arrogance no less contemptible, and that equally deserves reprehension and chastisement, to wit, their assuming to be infallible caterers for the taste of the publick; that no piece should be applauded but what they had approved; none hissed but what they had insinuated their previous dislike of. Yet, notwithstanding their unfavourable opinion of Pedro de Moya's tragedy, it succeeded.

And this was one of the many instances of new plays being received with great applause, which the actors had thought meanly of; and of those to which they had given the highest praise before exhibition, being damned. Nay, from the frequency of the fact, it was at last become a maxim among the people, to be prejudiced against every

H

new

new piece that the actors had previously spoken well of, and to think favourably of those they had spoken slightly of.

What put the last seal to this opinion of the publick, was, the exhibition of a new comedy forced by the dint of recommendation to be received; which the company of comedians one and all, cried out against, averring that it wanted business, was uninteresting and tedious; that the audience would never sit on the two first acts; that the play should meet with the least favour from the publick, they would for ever after renounce all claim to judgment and taste; and begin to think as badly of their own understandings as the publick had thought for a long time.

The night appointed for the first representation being come, the actors dressed with reluctancy, and appeared like men going to be exposed to some publick ignominy. The curtain was drawn up, and in this opinion did they begin the piece. After the first act ensued a burst of uncommon applause, which astonished the actors; a greater shout followed the second; thus the actors who had prejudged against the piece, were quite disconcerted. "Zounds" cried Rosimiro, pale with rage and disappointment, "is it not amazing that this piece should take?" The third act rose upon the audience, as did their applause, nay acclamations

mations in return. Ricardo, another of the actors, said, "Who ever saw the like, that a piece which we were all firmly persuaded was detestable, should give such universal and exquisite pleasure." This exclamation being overheard by a gentleman behind the scenes, he said to Ricardo, "The reason friend is, that this piece abounds in a thousand delicate strokes of wit, above the level of theatrical understanding." The same observation may be applied to the actors of all nations as well as to those of Madrid.

F I N I S.





